

“Rejecting the Claims of Jesus”

June 28, 2026

John 10:22-42

I. Introduction

Today’s Scripture marks the end of John’s record of Jesus’ public ministry. For nearly 3 years, Jesus had traveled the length and breadth of Israel. He preached the gospel and called for repentance. He confronted the hypocritical religious leaders and their false religion. He taught His disciples and performed countless signs and wonders which confirmed that He was the Messiah. But despite all of that, there were still many who wondered about Him. At the end of His life, Jesus had only a handful of genuine followers: [Acts 1:15](#) mentions 120 in Jerusalem and [1 Corinthians 15:6](#) indicates several hundred more in Galilee.

The first part of this chapter—[verses 1-21](#)—occurred on the days following the Feast of Tabernacles. John wrote that Jesus’ confrontation in today’s Scripture was during the Feast of Dedication. Since the Feast of Tabernacles was in the last part of October and the Feast of Dedication was in the last part of December, there was a two-month interval between [verse 21](#) and [verse 22](#). John seems to have put these two scenes together because in both messages, Jesus used the imagery of the shepherd and the sheep.

This last scene of Jesus’ public ministry took place at the Feast of Dedication, which is also called the Feast of Lights or Hanukkah. It was not one of the feasts described in the Old Testament. Basically, Hanukkah celebrates the Israelites’ victory over the infamous Syrian king Antiochus Epiphanes in 164 BC. Antiochus had captured Jerusalem and desecrated the Temple in 170 BC by sacrificing a pig on the altar, setting up a pagan altar in its place, and erecting a statue of Zeus in the most holy place. Under his decree the Jews were required to offer sacrifices to pagan gods, they were not allowed to own or read the Old Testament Scriptures, and copies of it were destroyed after being soaked with pig’s blood. They were forbidden to perform such mandatory religious practices as observing the Sabbath and circumcising children.

Pious Jews, led by a priest named Mattathias and his sons, rose up in revolt. After 3 years of guerilla warfare the Jews, under the leadership of Mattathias’ son, Judas Maccabeus, were able to retake Jerusalem. Towards the end of 164 BC, they liberated the Temple, rededicated it, and established the Feast of

Dedication. As the people celebrated a great event in history, they hoped for a new beginning. Expectation filled the air. The people wondered, “*Would God’s divine deliverer come at this time to set His people free?*” The Jewish leaders and the people were celebrating a great event in history--yet they missed a more significant event that was happening before their very own eyes in their very own temple.

II. The Close of Jesus’ Public Ministry

A. The Encounter John closed the public part of Jesus’ ministry with one more confrontation between Jesus and the Jewish religious leaders. It all began with the encounter. “*It was winter, and Jesus was in the temple area walking in Solomon’s Colonnade.*” Located on the east side of the temple area, Solomon’s colonnade would provide shelter from the chilling winter winds and, since winter is the rainy season in Palestine, from any rain that might fall. As was the custom of the day, Jesus walked as He taught.

As He went along, “*the Jews gathered around him.*” Actually, the hostile leaders surrounded Jesus so that He had to stop and listen to them. They had decided that it was time for a showdown and they did not want Him to evade the issue any longer. They demanded of Him, “*How long will you keep us in suspense? If you are the Christ, tell us plainly.*” Because He was the greatest threat to their power and prestige, they were desperately looking for a way to discredit Him and get rid of Him permanently. **Turn to John 11:47-50.**

Far from being an honest request for information—they had seen and heard Him for 3 years—the Jewish leadership’s demand was actually just another attempt to trap Jesus. The goal was to get rid of Him. If they could get Jesus to declare publically that He was the Messiah, they would be able to arrest Him and silence Him forever as a blasphemer.

B. Jesus’ Reply After the challenge there was Jesus’ reply. He said that He had already told them plainly who He was. Jesus answered the same way He did to John the Baptist’s disciples—**turn to Matthew 11:2-5.** As He did then, Jesus emphasized the witness of His words— “*I did tell you*”—and His works—“*The miracles I do speak for me.*”

Jesus went on to explain why the Jewish leaders did not understand His words or grasp the significance of His works: “*you are not my sheep.*” They lacked understanding, not because they lacked

information, but because they lacked repentance and faith. Their unbelief was not due to insufficient exposure to the truth, but as Jesus said in [John 3:19-20](#), “Light has come into the world, but men loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil. Everyone who does evil hates the light and will not come into the light for fear that his deeds will be exposed.”

From the human viewpoint, one becomes Jesus’ sheep by believing; but from the divine viewpoint, God’s viewpoint, one believes because he is Jesus’ sheep. From the perspective of human responsibility, the hostile Jews did not believe because they deliberately rejected the truth. But from the standpoint of divine sovereignty, they did not believe because they were not of the Lord’s sheep. Once again, we see the mystery of human responsibility and divine sovereignty—free will and election (e.g., [Luke 22:22](#); [Acts 2:23](#)). This may be a mystery for our human minds, but somehow, in God’s infinite mind, free will and election work together. [Turn to Romans 11:33-36](#). [Isaiah 55:6](#) puts it this way: “For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your way my ways,’ declares the Lord.”

Jesus then repeated what He had said a couple of months earlier, “My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me.” Jesus went on to explain that His sheep are secure in His hand and in the Father’s hand. Jesus also repeated His promise from [John 3:16](#) and [John 6:39](#), “They shall never perish.”

The security of Jesus’ sheep is assured in several ways. **First**, “I give them eternal life.” To speak of eternal life ending is a contradiction in terms. Eternal life is forever. **Second**, Christ gives eternal life. Eternal life is a gift, not something that one earns or merits. It would seem logical that, if we were not saved by our own good works, but by God’s grace, then we cannot be lost by our “*bad works*” ([Romans 11:16](#)). **Third**, Jesus promised, “They will never perish.” Were even one sheep to be lost, it would make Him a liar. **Fourth**, “No one can snatch them out of my hand.” No one is powerful enough to snatch Jesus’ sheep out of His hand. **Finally**, “No one can snatch them out of my Father’s hand.” Christ’s sheep are held not only in His hand, but also in the hand of the Father who “is greater than all.”

Jesus then made a statement that He knew would shock His enemies and give them more reason to oppose Him. It was the “*plain answer*” they were looking for: “I and the Father are one.” “I and the Father

are one” is as clear a statement of Jesus’ deity as can be found anywhere in Scripture. It was even stronger than His statement that He had come down from heaven (John 6) or that He existed before Abraham ever lived (John 8:58). The word “One” does not mean that the Father and the Son are identical persons. Rather it means that they are one in essence; i.e., the Father is God and the Son is God, but the Father is not the Son, and the Son is not the Father. Jesus was speaking of unity, not identity. John 1:1 summarizes it this way: “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.”

C. The Response The Jewish leaders and the people clearly understood what Jesus was saying. Contrary to what some liberal theologians teach, the people who heard what Jesus said knew He was saying, “*I am God!*” This led to the response: incensed by this blasphemy, “Again (for the fourth time in John’s Gospel; John 5:16-18; 7:1; 8:59) the Jews picked up stones to stone him.” Though only the Romans had the right of capital punishment, the angry lynch mob was ready to take matters into its own hands and suffer the consequences later.

D. The Defense Showing godly calm in the face of His opponents’ murderous rage, Jesus defended Himself as He asked, “I have shown you many great miracles from the Father. For which of these do you stone me?” Jesus didn’t withdraw His claim to be equal with God. Instead, He forced them to face and deal with His miraculous good works done at the direction of the Father (John 5:19-23).

But the enraged Jews weren’t going to be deterred by any miracle. Although the signs and wonders that Jesus performed demonstrated that He was the Messiah, their minds were made up. They refused to consider the possibility that His claim might be true. In their minds, regardless of the facts, Jesus was guilty of the ultimate act of blasphemy because, as they told Him, “You, a mere man, claim to be God.” They never “got it.” Far from being a mere man who was arrogantly claiming to be God, Jesus was in fact almighty God who had selflessly humbled Himself in becoming a man to die for the world. Phil. 2:6-8 says, “Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death---even death on a cross.”

Jesus used Psalm 82 in His defense and to stop their actions. **Turn to Psalm 82.** The picture is that of a court. God had assembled the evil judges of the earth to warn them that they too will one day be judged. The Hebrew word used here is “*elohim*” (ʾēlōhîm) which can be translated as “*gods*” or “*judges*.” It is also one of the Old Testament names for God. The Jewish leaders knew their own language and their Scriptures. They knew that Jesus was speaking the truth. Jesus was saying that if mere men, who were evil, could in some sense be called gods, how could it be inappropriate for Jesus, the “**One whom the Father set apart, i.e., sanctified, and sent into the world**” to call Himself the Son of God?

In infinite patience, Jesus used the Old Testament to appeal to the leaders to ignore their biased conclusions and consider the evidence. He closed His appeal by urging them to believe, if only in His miracles. “**Even though you do not believe me, believe the miracles, that you may know and understand that the Father is in me, and I in the Father.**” If they would believe the miracles, then they would know the Father, and that would open the way for them to know the Son and believe in Him. It was simply a matter of examining the evidence honestly and being willing to accept the truth.

E. The Rejection As supposed men of God, the leadership should have been willing to follow the evidence to its logical conclusion. But, not surprisingly, the Lord’s challenge fell on deaf ears and blind eyes. Instead of considering the evidence, they rejected Jesus’ appeal and “**Again they tried to seize him, but he escaped their grasp. Then Jesus went back across the Jordan to the place where John had been baptizing in the early days.**” Jesus did not return until 2 or 3 months later to raise Lazarus from the dead and then to enter Jerusalem on “Palm Sunday,” when He presented Himself as Israel’s King.

As always, they were some who believed in Him. “**They said, ‘Though John never performed a miraculous sign, all that John said about this man was true.’ And in that place, many believed in Jesus.**” The common people continued to seek Jesus, and He continued to minister to them. John the Baptist’s witness continued to bear fruit even after his death. John’s witness led many to trust in the Savior. John was not a miracle worker, but he was a faithful witness who pointed to Jesus Christ. Jesus finished His ministry where John the Baptist began his.

So, Jesus' public ministry closed with one last rejection by the very leaders who should have hailed Him as the Messiah. Their rejection was a precursor to Jesus' final rejection a few months later, when the people under the direction of these same leaders would cry out, **"Away with Him, away with Him, crucify Him!"** (John 19:15 KJV).

III. Conclusion

Jesus' words and actions are just as important today as they were 2000 years ago. In this chapter John recorded 3 claims of the Jesus. **First**, He is the Gate or the Door. Have you entered in by faith so that you are saved—saved from an eternity in hell? Acts 4:12 says, **"Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to mankind by which we must be saved."** There is only one door, one way. **Second**, He is the Good Shepherd. Have you heard His voice and trusted Him? Jesus said in Matthew 11:28, **"Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest."** Do you seek and follow His leading in your daily life? James 1:22 says, **"Do not merely listen to the word, and deceive yourselves. Do what it says."** **Third**, He is the Son of God. Have you given yourself to Him and received eternal life? John 3:16 says, **"For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life."**

Today, there are many, like those of the hostile Jewish nation, who allow their preconceived ideas about religion and God and their love for sin blind themselves to the saving truth about Jesus Christ. Sadly, for them, the good news that Jesus saves falls on deaf ears and blind eyes. Salvation doesn't depend on what church one attends or on how many good things one does or how sincere one is. Jesus said in John 8:24, **"If you do not believe that I am the one I claim to be, you will indeed die in your sins."**

If you are one of Jesus' sheep, the prime directive is still the Great Commission: **"Go and make disciples of all nations"** (Matthew 28:19). Like Jesus, we need to be patient as we present the Gospel over and over and over. There are some who will hear and believe and will be saved. Our job is to plant and water the seed of the Gospel, but God will make it grow. 1 Corinthians 3:7 says, **"So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God, who makes things grow."** Is Jesus your Lord and Savior?