

My Sheep Hear My Voice

John 10:22-30

The Feast of Dedication had come. Antiochus Epiphanes, in a great affront to the Jews of his day had profaned the temple of God in Jerusalem by sacrificing a sow on the altar of God. Not only had this been done with the intent of humiliating the Jewish people by the use of swine in such a way, but the act was also said to be in honor of the god Jupiter.

The temple had been rededicated by the great Judas Maccabaeus in 165 B.C. This was during that period of time when there was autonomy for Israel. Now the Romans were ruling them, and no doubt the Feast of Dedication was a poignant reminder of better days.

We are taught that Christians are the temple of God today. "Do you not know that you are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in you?" 1 Corinthians 3:16

The Lord Jesus Christ took the occasion of the feast which reminded the Jews of the house of God and its purity to speak of the true house of God, which is to speak of God's true people. The Lord taught them that those who thought of themselves as the people of God were not. They had demanded that he announce himself as the Messiah. Jesus responded in this way, "I told you, and you do not believe. The works that I do in my Father's name bear witness about me, but you do not believe because you are not part of my flock." (10:25b-26)

The Lord's people are characterized by a willingness to listen to him. He is our great prophet. On the Mount of Transfiguration we were told to hear him. He is our Word from God that reveals what God is like and reveals God's will for our lives today. Those who have faith in him listen to him as he has been revealed to us in his words and works. He knows us. The apostle Paul tells us that the Father chose a people for his glory in eternity past. The Lord Jesus Christ knows who those people are. The Lord Jesus Christ came to die for those who were chosen by the Father. He secured their salvation by taking the punishment due them in his own body on the cross.

Notice the certainty of this work of Christ for his own, and the effect of it in their lives both now, and for all time and eternity. He gives us eternal life. This is the gift of God. It is not earned; it is given. It is eternal. It never comes to an end. And notice the security that comes with this precious gift of life. "I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand. 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." (10:28-29)

So those who actually belong to Christ, those for whom he died, hear him and come to faith in him, they believe his words, they follow him, (this is perseverance in faith) they are known by him, and they are kept safe by him, (this is preservation by God).

The Lord then made a statement about his own person that must have come as a great shock to his unbelieving hearers. He said, "I and the Father are one." (10:30)

The Lord Jesus Christ is fully man. He has come among us and tented or tabernacled among us, for a time. (1:14) He has been tempted as we are. He has known the limitations of our humanity. But all of this he did for us as the unique God-man. Only God could have known us as he did. Only God could have lived a perfect life of perfect righteousness for his own people. Only God could reveal himself in Christ to us. Only God could lead us in paths of righteousness. Only God could die in our place, offering up a life of perfect righteousness to establish us as the true temple of God. Only God could keep us securely in his love for eternity.

The heart of the matter is that Jesus is fully man for us and also fully God. He is the Lord from heaven, who came down to do for us what we could never have done for ourselves. He died the death due us on the cross and he lives to save and keep us. He has accomplished the will of the Father which was set in motion in eternity. His death on the tree is our salvation and guarantees the work of the Spirit on our behalf.

By Joe Nesom

