

Jesus Goes to the Feast of Dedication John 10:22-42

Three months had elapsed since Jesus had been in Jerusalem for the Feast of Tabernacles, during which He spent His time teaching about His person and mission. This message was met with hostility and unbelief. Since then, Jesus has been in ministry in the hill country of Judea and Perea, and some of the largest crowds came to Him at this time. Now Jesus returns to Jerusalem for the Feast of Dedication and immediately conflict with the Religious Leaders arises again. He will return to many of the same subjects of His person and mission. The Book of John gives us this brief teaching and interaction, and the people's continued rejection.

Feast of Tabernacles: This feast was held in late September or early October and centered at the temple. Large numbers of people flocked to Jerusalem. It was a commemoration of God's leading and provision of the people of Israel during the wilderness wanderings. One notable characteristic was building and living in "huts" during the eight-day celebration. Jesus had taught extensively during and just after its closing. Some of the highlights were:

- He had come from God
- Displayed His power by numerous miracles, including healing the man born blind
- Gave significant statements:
 - I am Living Water
 - I am the Door
 - I am the Good Shepherd
 - Explaining His love, protection, and the giving of His life for the sheep
 - He also explained that the sheep knew His voice and followed Him
 - I am the Light of the World
 - Before Abraham was I Am
- Overpowered the Religious Leaders with wisdom – Woman taken in Adultery
- Jesus caused great division among the people, and the Jews sought to stone Him

Feast of Dedication: This feast took place in late November or December, so it had been about 3 months since Jesus had last been in Jerusalem. It was not a religious, law-appointed holiday, but more political in nature. In 167 BC, the Jewish leader Judas Maccabeus recaptured the temple from a Roman general who was using it as a pagan place of worship. This feast celebrated the cleansing and the conversion of the temple back to worship of God. It could be celebrated anywhere, just not Jerusalem. Today, it is called Hanukkah and is still observed! John's record of this feast provides a chronological marker in the life of Jesus and divides the six month Judean ministry of Jesus in half.

I. Question

“And it was at Jerusalem the feast of the dedication, and it was winter.²³ And Jesus walked in the temple in Solomon's porch.²⁴ Then came the Jews (Lit. – Religious Leaders) round about him (Gk - accosted, blocking his way; circled; surrounded), and said unto him, How long dost thou make us to doubt (Lit. - keep us in suspense; not give us a straight answer)? If thou be the Christ, tell us plainly.”
John 10:22-24

Jesus would not have had to come to Jerusalem for this feast, but He did. John tells us that He was in the Temple walking on Solomon's porch, a large, covered walkway supported by large stone columns just inside the temple courtyard. Remember, we were told that it was winter, and this area would be protected from cool winds and weather. (Rainy season – highs – low 60s to high 50s; lows – mid 40s at night)

Then “came the Jews around about him.” The action in the Greek is strong with emotion. They surrounded Jesus and blocked His way and demanded, “How long will you keep us in suspense? Give a straight answer. If you are the Messiah, tell us plainly!” Well, we know Jesus had told them plainly before, three months before! Plainly enough, they picked up stones to stone Him for blasphemy. (“Before Abraham was I am” John 8:58-59)

II. Answer

“Jesus answered them, I told you, and ye believed not: the works that I do in my Father's name, they bear witness of me. ²⁶But ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep, as I said unto you. ²⁷My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: ²⁸And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never (Lit. – double negative - never, never) perish, neither shall any man (Lit. – any created thing – Devil, demons) pluck (Lit. - snatch with force) them out of my hand. ²⁹My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand. ³⁰I and my Father are one.” John 10:25-30

- Why they don't believe: The problem wasn't with Jesus, but with them! Notice, they said, “How long will you make us doubt?” but Jesus will point out it wasn't doubt but **unbelief**, and He went directly to the testimony of His innumerable miracles and signs. (“ye believed not: the works that I do in my Father's name” v. 25) Of course, earlier in His ministry, Jesus said the same thing to Religious leaders found in John 5:36, “But I have greater witness than that of John...the same works that I do, bear witness of me, that the Father hath sent me.” Same words, but they wouldn't believe! **They were not His sheep!** This is the use of the sheep/shepherd illustration, very similar to what He taught just after the Feast of Tabernacles (John 10:1-18). They didn't belong to Jesus. They could not hear Him, know Him, or follow Him because they were not His sheep!
- “Eternal life” – Once again, Jesus will speak of the eternal life that He gives His sheep, but don't miss His statements about the security of that eternal life. First, the phrase “never perish” is very strong being a double negative – like “never, never perish,” or “absolutely never perish,” “cannot ever, never perish.” This was the strongest language Jesus could use. He emphasizes the fact that with His eternal life, we will not ever perish! But also, we are safe in His **eternal grip!** Jesus had the power to hold His sheep. None would ever get away! Eternal life is not our doing, but God's. When this Good Shepherd starts with 100, He will end with 100! Verse 29 shows us again that Jesus didn't work independently of His Father, “My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand.” So, the character of eternal life is, of course, **eternal**, and the character of the giver is a **powerful Keeper!** Wow!
- “I am my Father are one.” – I read several statements concerning Jesus' declaration here. It is certainly a climax to the Gospel of John and the clearest statement of Jesus' divinity that He ever made. What exactly does this mean? The Father and Jesus the Son are two individuals within the three-person

Godhead (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit); in nature and character, they are the same. They are in perfect harmony. **Read John 5:19-20.** Later, when praying to His Father just before His death, Jesus will say much the same thing, "...that they may one, even as we are one." (John 17:22) Within this context, Jesus is pointing out their agreement and powerful ability to hold their sheep, His followers, in their hand! (v. 28-29) They share the same goals, actions, and will. They have the same mind, and here it is demonstrated with the secure grip they hold believers! We really can't illustrate that type of oneness here on earth. There is no earthly relationship that mirrors the one of God the Son and God the Father, and that is because of our sinful nature. But the closest might be the bond of husband and wife. I have stood with friends and relatives when their spouse lay in a casket. You could almost see that half of them were torn away and put in that coffin too! John and I will be married for 43 years this summer. We were 19 and 18 when we met and started dating. We share the same goals, philosophies of life and ministry, 43 years of experiences and memories, 6 children, 7 grandchildren, expenses, assets, the list can go on and on. BUT we are not the same! We still struggle with details, work through decisions, annoy each other with our preferences, get impatient and short-tempered, and strain to communicate clearly, sweetly, concisely... We are really not one; instead, we are flawed with sin! But the Godhead is holy, sinless, and as Jesus said, "I and my Father are one." The Jews understood exactly what Jesus was saying, He was God in the flesh and...

III. Reaction

"Then the Jews took up stones again to stone him." John 10:31

The word "again" is used here because this was not the first time Jesus' enemies had stones in their hands, ready to throw them at Him! Shortly after the Feast of Tabernacles, in John 8:59, was the first time, and here's the second. This was mob action, not what was prescribed in Leviticus 24:10-15. There, it was taught that blasphemers were to be tried before being stoned. But Jesus went on calmly and, as a learned Rabbi, taught them from the Scriptures.

IV. De-escalation

"Jesus answered them, Many good (Lit. - beautiful, great, noble) works (Lit. – miracles) have I showed you from my Father; for which of those works do ye stone me? ³³The Jews answered him, saying, For a good work we stone thee not; but for blasphemy; and because that thou, being a man , makest thyself God. ³⁴Jesus answered them, Is it not written in your law, I said, Ye are gods? ³⁵If he called them gods, unto whom the word of God came, and the scripture cannot be broken (Lit. - completely true; wholly true);" John 10:32-35

"Many good works have I showed you from my Father" – I love this, Jesus is reminding them of the thousands of amazing, beautiful, great, noble, wonderful miracles He had done during His ministry, and then simply asks, "Which one of these are you stoning me for?" Please recognize the fact that they don't deny even a single one of those miracles, but affirm that Jesus said He was God. We can only imagine that those stones were still in the hands of the Jewish Leaders when Jesus began a Bible lesson from Psalm 82:6-7....

"Ye are gods? If he called them gods, unto whom the word of God came" – These verses are concerning the unjust judges of Israel. God calls them "gods" because of their position to represent God. But their rulings and

work were actually in rebellion against Him and His character of holiness. **Read Psalm 82:1-8.** Jesus is laying out that if God gave these Old Testament judges a commission, how much more was Jesus, **who did** God's work and will perfectly, have the right to be called God. If evil judges were called "gods," why not the righteous One **from** God! The title was appropriate when you were the Son of God! Then Jesus reminds them, "The Scripture is always true and whole. It cannot be broken." The learned Jewish Leaders understood him and had to drop their stones. His argument was solid, but then Jesus went on to challenge all who could hear with two statements He had already said! He plainly repeats two lines. And let's be careful to understand and apply this challenge to our souls as well.

V. Challenge

"Say ye of him, whom the Father hath sanctified (Lit. - set apart; consecrated), and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest; because I said, I am the Son of God? ³⁷If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not. ³⁸But if I do, though ye believe not me, believe the works : that ye may know, and believe, that the Father is in me, and I in him." John 10:36-38

"the Father hath sanctified, and sent into the world,.....I am the Son of God"- Here's plain language again in two statements. The **Father sent Him into the world**, and that **He was the Son of God!** For over three years, Jesus had been doing the "works" of His Father. He reflected His Father in absolutely everything He did and said! He did God's will and work. People with an open mind saw it, understood it, believed it, and followed Him! They were sheep and received eternal life. But those with a hard heart were different; every single thing Jesus did or said bounced off their heart of stone like a child's cheap bouncy ball! Hardness caused by pride, preconceived religious ideas, and self-righteousness made them unable to hear the truth and see Jesus as their Messiah when He stood before them!

"believe the works: that ye man know, and believe, that the Father is in me, and I in Him." – While walking on the Temple grounds under the lovely carved arches and pillars of Solomon's court, Jesus was surrounded by those who hated Him. They demanded a clear statement of His person, and they got it twice! "I and my Father are one" and "the Father is in me, and I in Him." And then Jesus calls them to **believe** it! How did they react to these truths and statements, to Jesus' clear wisdom and knowledge?

VI. Reaction

"Therefore they sought again to take him: but he escaped out of their hand," John 10:39

They desired to take Him - **again!** **Wow!** They didn't pick up stones, that hadn't gone well a few minutes before, but they did want to grab Him, and we can assume they would have taken Him to a mock court of some kind and tried Him as a blasphemer. The very Son of God in the flesh, who dwelt among them, whose glories they beheld daily. They saw the works given to Him directly from His Father, but also heard His words. Words full of grace and truth. "But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name." (John 1:12,14) They sought to take him again, but miraculously he escaped out their hand.

VII. Retreat

“And went away again beyond Jordan into the place where John at first baptized; and there he abode. ⁴¹And many resorted unto him (Lit. – came pouring in), and said, John did no miracle: but all things that John spake of this man were true. ⁴²And many believed on him there.” John 10:40-42

‘beyond Jordan’ – Jesus left for the east side of the Jordan River, probably about 18-20 miles from Jerusalem. He removed Himself from the unbelieving Religionist and found many simple-minded and true-hearted men. These were blue-collar Jews and very likely non-Jews as well, for this was a mixed area of Jews and Gentiles. Here, John the Baptist had ministered only about three years before. Really, it had not been very long at all, and they remembered him well.

John’s testimony of Jesus continued: They remembered that John didn’t do miracles, not even one. But John’s message about Jesus was absolutely true! Jesus would be greater than himself. John said that he would not be worthy to even untie or carry Jesus’ shoes. And the people remembered those statements! Jesus was great! And the results of John’s ministry continued to bear fruit... for

“many believed on him there” – John’s testimony had prepared the way for this successful campaign near the end of Jesus’ ministry. Many were convinced in their hearts concerning the person of Jesus!

Believers’ Application:

Let’s remind ourselves more about John the Baptist’s ministry. Let’s read about some of those things he had told the people of this area about Jesus and His person! **Read John 1:19-34.** You know, three years later, the people remembered those statements, and they believed in Jesus.

- They understood the phrase, “**Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.**” – They understood that Jesus came from God, as a willing sacrifice, for the sins of all of us. Those sins had separated man from God, but God, in His love and compassion, made a way for man to be cleansed, and that was by the blood of the sinless Lamb of God, Jesus, His Son! Jesus became our Lamb. Later, the Apostle John will write, “But if we walk in the light as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ, his Son, cleanseth us from all sin.” 1 John 1:7
- But the people also remembered and understood the phrase of John the Baptist, “**I saw, and bear record that this is the Son of God.**”

How about you? Have you come to believe that Jesus is the **Son of God**? Have you agreed with God about your need for Jesus to die to take away your sins? You too must hear and believe the simple ABCs of Salvation:

A – **Admit you are a sinner** - “For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God” Romans 3:23

B – **Believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God and that He died for your sins** - “But God commendedth (Lit. - demonstrated) his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.” Romans 5:8

C – **Confess your faith and surrender your life to Jesus!** “That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved: For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on Him shall not be ashamed.” Romans 10:9-11

Those of you who know Jesus as your Savior, are you being an influencer for Jesus to those around you? Are you salt and light? Is your testimony, like that of John the Baptist, influencing others to believe in Him? Let's be that kind of influencer! **Read Matthew 5:13-16**