

BLASPHEMY!

John 10:22-42



SYNOPSIS

During the Feast of Dedication (known today as Hanukkah), Jesus - the Word - was accused of blasphemy as he walked in the temple courts in Solomon's Colonnade. He had been making messianic claims throughout his ministry, but this claim was made in response to a direct question. Jesus's conclusion of his shepherd-sheep teaching offers us the reassurance that our Messiah's grip on us is stronger than our grip on him.



OUTLINE

1

PLAIN STATEMENTS

The Jews could be forgiven for asking Jesus to state plainly whether he was the Messiah. John the Baptizer had the same question. Jesus also kept his messianic identity mysterious though he said that his claims, teaching, and miracles were sufficient proof. He fulfilled messianic prophecies, but he came to us on his own terms, clearly and comfortably refusing to play into the Jews' expectations. Understandably, these expectations made it difficult to believe in him. However, Jesus responds with another plain statement: You do not believe because you are not my sheep. (v26)

2

THE SHEPHERD'S GRIP ON HIS SHEEP

Many view the sinner's prayer as assurance of salvation, but Jesus repeats that relationship with him is proven by knowing his voice. (v27) He gives further reassurance that his sheep will never be snatched out of his hand. (v28) John Piper: Our security is not based finally on our grip on Christ, but his grip on us. May we rest in the assurance of Jesus's intimate knowledge of and firm grip on us. May our ultimate rejoicing be that our names are written in heaven. (Luke 10:20)

3

"YOU ARE GODS"

The Feast of Dedication was a celebration of the cleansing of the temple after the Maccabean Revolt. Jesus's messianic claims while standing in the temple during that time may have felt extra offensive if seen as blasphemy. Yet the Jews could not see that Jesus himself was the fulfillment of what the temple symbolized (i.e. Emmanuel), that the freedom the Jews prayed for could only be found in Jesus. He represented the fullness of everything they were celebrating. Yet they wanted to stone him. He quotes Ps 82 to remind the Jews that their nation was intended to be God's representatives. "You are gods" was understood to refer to the Israelites who received the Torah. Asaph wrote Ps 82 to lament the wickedness and corruption of his day, yet the religious leaders around Jesus did the same. Jesus fulfilled and dispensed the law with justice and righteousness. As his sheep, we are called to do the same. We were set apart for the high and holy calling of dispensing God's law with justice and righteousness. John Piper: The true Christian is safe, but his safety is confirmed in his pressing on to make his final inheritance his own. Are we Jesus's sheep? Have we, like sheep, gone astray?



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DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1

How would you describe your spiritual journey after conversion? Coasting? Persevering? Somewhere in between?

2

What does it look like to dispense God's law with justice and righteousness?

3

In which aspect of your life could you bring more of the Kingdom of God? How would you do this?

4

How do you hear Jesus's voice? How do you discern his voice from other voices?

5

How assured do you feel about your own salvation? What makes you feel assured/insecure about it?



BIG IDEA

The more we see our weaknesses, the more easily we can imagine straying from the high and holy calling God has placed on his people. We are called into an intimate love relationship with Jesus and to dispense God's law with justice and righteousness. May we derive great assurance that our perseverance keeps us in Jesus's grip, and his grip on us is infinitely tighter than ours on him.

