

“Jesus Celebrates Hanukkah”

John 10:22-42

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Teaching Aim: To understand the significance of “*the Feast of Dedication*” and the reason behind Jesus traveling to Jerusalem to celebrate it. To realize that Jesus had not only been telling people that He was the Christ, the Son of God, but He had also been demonstrating it to the Jewish people through miracles He performed. To recognize the reason so many people refused to believe in Jesus was because they were not His sheep. To understand it is Jesus who calls His own sheep and gives them eternal life; no one is able to snatch them out of His hand and His Father’s hand, they are eternally secure in Christ.

DIGGING DEEPER INTO GOD’S WORD (*BIBLE STUDY*)

Part I: Jesus returned to Jerusalem to celebrate the Feast of Dedication (John 10:22-23)

1. As we come to **John 10:22**, two and a half months had passed since the events of **John 7:1-10:21** at the Feast of Tabernacles. Jesus was now in Jerusalem in December celebrating “*the Feast of Dedication*” or “*Hanukkah*.” John MacArthur writes, “*The Jewish celebration of Hanukkah celebrates the Israelite victory over the Syrian leader Antiochus Epiphanes, who persecuted Israel. In 170 B.C. he conquered Jerusalem and desecrated the Jewish temple by setting up a pagan altar to displace the altar of God. Under the leadership of an old priest named Mattathias (his family name was called the Hasmoneans), the Jews fought guerrilla warfare, (known as the Maccabean Revolt- 166-142 B.C.) against Syria and freed the temple and the land from Syrian dominance until 63 B.C. when Rome (& Pompey) took control of Palestine. It was in 164 B.C. on 25 Kislev, (Dec. approximately), that the Jews liberated the temple and rededicated it. The celebration is also known as the ‘Feast of Lights’ because of the lighting of lamps and candles in Jewish homes to commemorate the event.*” Why do you think Jesus showed up in Jerusalem for this event (**vs. 22**)? What are the Jewish people referring to when they speak of the miracle of Hanukkah?
2. The desecration by Antiochus IV Epiphanes was a partial fulfillment of the prophecy in **Dan. 11:30-31**. Antiochus replaced the altar with a statue of Zeus. What will the ultimate fulfillment of this prophecy be? (See **2 Thess. 2:1-4**) Who is the leader in **2 Thess. 2:1-4**?
3. The Catholic Bible has seven additional books in it that are not included in our Protestant Bibles, we call these books the Apocrypha. Should the books of the Apocrypha be honored at the same level as Scripture? Why or why not? Should Christians read the Apocrypha today? What would the Reformers say? What can we learn about “*the Feast of Dedication*” from **1 Maccabees 1:36-59**? (Hint: Search for it online)

4. Solomon's porch (or colonnade) was a favorite place for Jesus to teach (**vs. 23**). The porch was a long-covered area supported by many large stone columns. What made the covering so attractive for Jesus to teach under during both winter and summer?

Part II: The Good Shepherd continues to define who are His sheep (John 10:24-30)

1. How did the Jewish religious leaders respond to Jesus when they saw Him teaching at Solomon's colonnade (**vs. 24**)? What answer did they demand from Jesus? Had Jesus proclaimed that He was the Christ, the Son of God? (See **John 4:25-26; 6:35; 7:37-39; 8:23-25; 9:35-37**) What was the purpose behind the religious leaders wanting Jesus to declare whether He was the Son of God or not?
2. What was Jesus' response in **verse 25**? What did Jesus offer as proof that He was indeed the Son of God? (See **Isa. 35:3-6**) According to **verse 26**, why did so many of the Jews not believe in Him? Why do people still refuse to believe in Jesus today?
3. There are only two kinds of people in the world, those who are saved and those who are not. How are Christ's sheep different from the goats (**vs. 27**)? (See **Matt. 25:31-46**) An underlying characteristic of the sheep who belong to Jesus is their obedience to the Great Shepherd. On a scale of 1-10, how would you rate your walk with the Lord? What three characteristics does Jesus lay out for His sheep in **verse 27**?
4. When it comes to the topic of the eternal security of the born-again believer, there are no stronger Scriptures in the Bible than what is found in **John 10:27-30**. Where do Christ's sheep find their security for the future? Aren't you glad that our eternal security doesn't depend upon the way we feel? Is this an excuse for believers to live a lifestyle of sin?

5. Does our eternal security mean that we won't have to suffer on earth? (See **John 15:18-20**) What do you think is the meaning behind the statement, "*The saints persevere because it is God who preserves them*"?

6. Jesus repeats His promise from **verse 28** in **verse 29**, but this time with a twist. What does Jesus add? Is our eternal security dependent more upon our holding tightly to God, or God holding tightly to us? Why is this so important?

7. What did Jesus mean when He said, "*I and My Father are one*?" Was Jesus saying that He and the Father are one in person? (See **John 1:1-2a**) Or was he saying that they are one in purpose (preserving the eternal security of the true believer)?

Part III: Jesus demonstrates that He is the Son of God (John 10:31-42)

1. How did the Jews respond to Jesus' declaration, "*I and My Father are one*" (**vs. 31**)? What Old Testament verse had the Jewish religious leaders used as their basis to stone Jesus? (See **Lev. 24:16**) What is the definition of the word, "*blasphemy*?" (See Dictionary) Had Jesus committed this sin? Had the Jews tried to stone Jesus before? (See **John 5:18; 8:59**)

2. Did Jesus flee when they picked up stones? What did He do (**vs. 32**)? Specifically, what was Jesus referring to when He said, "*Many good works I have shown you from My Father*"? How did the Jews respond to Him (**vs. 33**)?

3. Once again, the Jews accused Jesus of committing blasphemy (**vs. 33**)? On what basis did the Jews accuse Him of this? Note: Interestingly enough, the religious leaders had it completely backwards. They claimed Jesus was a man who made Himself out to be God. Actually, Jesus was God who became Man.

4. When Jesus was falsely accused, He took the religious leaders directly to the Scriptures. What Old Testament passage did Jesus refer to them too? (See **Psalm 82:6**) Does this Scripture mean the Mormons are right in believing that people can become gods? What can we learn from reading **Psalm 82:6-8** in context? (See Commentaries) It is important to note God's people can be called "*children of God*," but there is only one "*Son of God*."

5. What did Jesus use as the basis for His argument in **verse 35**? Note: **Psalm 82:6** speaks of human rulers or judges. How did Jesus use the Scriptures to argue from the lesser to the greater in making His point? What argument did He use? (See Commentaries)

6. Notice that Jesus' argument is based on the trustworthiness of Sacred Scripture. What do we mean when we say, "*The Scriptures and the Scriptures alone are the authority for what we believe*"? (See **John 5:39-40**)

7. What can we learn about Jesus and the charges against Him in **verse 36**? What argument did Jesus use in **verse 37**? Note: "*The works*" Jesus spoke of were miracles. Why can't unbelievers see Jesus for whom He really is? (See **2 Cor. 4:3-4**) What message should these "*works*" have been sending to the Jews (**vs. 38**)? Instead, what did the religious leaders attempt to do for a second time (**vs. 39**)? (See **John 8:59; 12:36**) Note: Jesus would not return to Jerusalem again until Palm Sunday. No one was able to touch Him until it was His appointed hour for the crucifixion, that would be coming soon enough.

8. When Jesus left Jerusalem, He went about 20 miles east to the other side of the Jordan River in Perea where John had been baptizing (**vs. 40**). Where did Jesus begin His public ministry? (See **Matt. 3:13-17**)

9. How did the people on the eastern side of the Jordan respond to Jesus (**vs. 41**)? John MacArthur writes, *"The statement is ironic, since the area where John first began became the last in which Jesus stayed before he left for Jerusalem and crucifixion. The people remembered John's testimony to Christ and affirmed their faith in Him (vv. 41-42)."* What kind of a testimony will you leave when you die? What kind of testimony would you like to leave behind?

MINER'S CORNER ~ *Manna to live by!*

- Most Christians don't know what Hanukkah is, but Jesus did and made the trip to Jerusalem to celebrate it.
- Hanukkah falls in December each year close to Christmas.
- Hanukkah celebrates the cleansing of the temple during the Maccabean Revolt following it's desecration by Antiochus IV Epiphanes in 167 B.C.
- This story is found in **1 Maccabees 1:36-59** from the collection of books known as the Apocrypha.
- Jesus proclaimed *"the works"* He had done proved that He is the Christ, the Son of God.
- **John 10:27-30** present one of the strongest teachings in the Bible on the doctrine of the eternal security of the believer in Christ.
- The Jews realized that Jesus was claiming to be God and wanted to stone Him for it.
- Jesus prepared to finish His ministry in the very location that His public ministry began.