



International Bible Study Commentary

Verse-by-Verse Bible Lessons Thru the Bible

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John 10:22-31 Commentary New International Version

Questions for Discussion and Thinking Further follow the verse-by-verse [International Bible Study Commentary](#). **Study Hints for Discussion and Thinking Further** will help with class preparation and in conducting class discussion: these hints are available on the *International Bible Study Commentary* website along with the *International Bible Lesson* that you may want to read to your class as part of your Bible study. You can discuss each week's commentary and lesson at the [International Bible Study Forum](#).

(John 10:22) Then came the Festival of Dedication at Jerusalem. It was winter,

The Festival of Dedication, or Hanukkah, also called the Festival of Lights, lasted eight days, was celebrated in December, and commemorated the cleansing of the temple and altar and the rededication of the temple to God by Judas Maccabeus in 165 BC, after Antiochus Epiphanes desecrated the altar by sacrificing swine on it. Under the Maccabean dynasty, the Jews remained free for about 100 years until the Romans conquered Jerusalem and put King Herod on the throne. Herod was not a Jew but an Idumean. To please the Jews and solidify his political power, King Herod began restoring the temple in Jerusalem where Jesus taught and walked.

(John 10:23) and Jesus was in the temple courts walking in Solomon's Colonnade.

December was winter weather, and spiritually it was dark and cold in Judea. Jesus Christ, the true Light of the world, taught and preached the Good News in the portico of Solomon and other places in Jerusalem. Jesus

openly taught the crowds the same message continually so as many people as possible could hear Him and learn that He was the Good Shepherd. His sheep would hear His voice and follow Him. Obviously, there were no audio recordings, newspapers, or Internet services to report what Jesus taught. Jesus taught the crowds personally and repeated himself often, which also gave His disciples an opportunity to memorize His message and repeat His message accurately after Jesus ascended into heaven.

(John 10:24) The Jews who were there gathered around him, saying, “How long will you keep us in suspense? If you are the Messiah, tell us plainly.”

The portico of Solomon was sheltered by a roof and supported by columns 40 feet tall. While Jesus was walking in the temple, He was surrounded by religious leaders and rabbis (who also used the portico of Solomon for teaching their disciples). They demanded that Jesus tell them the truth about himself and declared plainly whether He was the Messiah. They had done the same to John the Baptist, who quoted Scripture and said he was not the Messiah but a voice crying in the wilderness. Everyone in Judea had popular ideas firmly fixed in their minds about what the Messiah would do when he came. They believed the Messiah would be a political leader who would restore their worldly kingdom above all the nations of the earth. Jesus' way was His Father's way and not what anyone expected, so Jesus could not answer them directly by saying, “Yes, I am the Messiah,” for they would have completely misunderstood Him. By word and deed, over a three-year period of ministry, Jesus had to show that He was the Messiah that God wanted them to have—not the Messiah they wanted. Either way, the religious leaders knew that they would lose their political power and position if Jesus succeeded as a new leader in Jerusalem, whether Messiah or not, so they had to oppose and dispose of Jesus no matter what He did.

(John 10:25) Jesus answered, “I did tell you, but you do not believe. The works I do in my Father's name testify about me,

In John's gospel, prior to this encounter, Jesus had told two people directly that He was the Messiah. He had told the Samaritan woman at the well and the man born blind that He healed. Jesus knew these two were His sheep

and believers in Him. Jesus told everyone else that He was the Messiah indirectly by His words and deeds. He healed the sick, gave sight to the blind, enabled the lame to walk, and raised the dead. He would soon raise Lazarus from the dead (see John 11). Jesus spoke figurative language for ears willing to hear so they would know that He was the Messiah: He was the Good Shepherd. But most of the religious leaders refused to understand Jesus or believe Him. He did works in His Father's name because He was sent by God. He did many works that none before Him did, such as, giving sight to the man born blind. His works bore witness that He was the Messiah, but not what the Jewish leaders expected or wanted. The religious leaders wanted to rule and reign with the Messiah, and Jesus made it clear that under His leadership as the Messiah this would not happen. They were not His sheep.

(John 10:26) but you do not believe because you are not my sheep.

First, Jesus placed the responsibility for their unbelief upon them, saying, "you do not believe." These religious leaders never actually believed the Scriptures or obeyed them; instead, they created laws that would help them avoid obeying the Scriptures. They created loopholes in the Law of God to benefit them and their friends. They were not the sheep of God because they would not listen to the Scriptures or obey God. Second, Jesus pointed to divine providence or divine judgment by saying of them, "you do not belong to my sheep." No doubt during the time between the Festival of Tabernacles and the Festival of Dedication Jesus had openly spoken and taught many times about being the Good Shepherd of the sheep, and He proved it by the loving and gracious help He gave others. He also taught that His sheep would hear His voice and follow Him (see John 10:1-21). These religious leaders knew the Law of Moses and their traditions, but they set the Law of God aside and disobeyed God to do as they wanted. They did not want to know God or the voice of God, so they did not belong among Jesus' sheep. They did not want Jesus' sheep to compete with them and their sheep: they wanted to maintain their control over all the people.

(John 10:27) My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me.

The sheep of God, the people of God, those led by Jesus the Good Shepherd, heard the voice of God in the loving ways of Jesus and the words Jesus spoke. Most importantly, Jesus said that He knew them! He knew them by name! As He said earlier, He called them by name, and they followed Him. They obeyed Him. They knew the Father had sent Him. The claims of Jesus brought division among the leaders when they saw their power slipping away as more people followed Jesus and obeyed His teachings instead of their traditions. Secular and anti-Christian leaders know that those who follow Jesus first always obey Him first, and they feel threatened as they lose control of those who come to know Jesus and love to serve God.

(John 10:28) I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one will snatch them out of my hand.

Recall what the religious leaders (called “the Jews” by John) offered people. Then recall that Jesus offered grace and truth. Jesus is full of grace and truth and grace and truth came through Jesus (see John 1:14-18). Jesus gives His sheep (those who believe in Him) eternal life, which is a God-given quality-of-life that begins here when anyone believes in Him and this God-given new life will last forever. Only God can give eternal life, and God does so by grace through faith in Jesus Christ, His only Son. No tyrant, politician, or set of rules can give eternal life to anyone. Jesus’ sheep will face many perils, persecutions, and sufferings in this world, but they will never perish; they will live forever with the Father and the Good Shepherd. Jesus, the Son of God, has the power of God and no one can snatch one of His sheep out of His hand. His hand gives eternal protection to His sheep.

(John 10:29) My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all; no one can snatch them out of my Father’s hand.

The truth and love that the Father gave Jesus to share with the world are greater than any truth or any love anyone will learn or experience in this world. The Father has given Jesus the sheep that He protects, and they listen to and follow Jesus. Jesus’ flock of sheep under His leadership as their Lord and Savior is greater than anything else in the world. The true Church, those who truly believe Jesus, also believe His Word. They love Him and obey Him, and the true Church is greater than anything else in the

world. The true Church is greater than any nation, kingdom, organization, corporation, political party, or group of people on earth. No one, not even the devil, can snatch the Church and out of the Father's hand or Jesus' hand. In Jesus' illustration earlier in this chapter, He spoke of wolves snatching unguarded sheep. The Father and the Son never sleep and are always guarding their sheep; therefore, even though their sheep may suffer in this world they cannot be snatched away from God the Father and Jesus; they cannot perish; they cannot lose eternal life.

(John 10:30) I and the Father are one.”

Jesus concluded His remarks by claiming more about himself than what they expected of the Messiah. Huge volumes have been written defining what this one verse means. At the least, Jesus meant and taught that God the Father and He were always in a perfect unity of love, thought, purpose, and agreement. At the least, Jesus must have meant that He always knew exactly what God the Father wanted Him to say and do; then, as God the Son, Jesus always did exactly what the Father wanted Him to say and do. The Gospels show repeatedly how God the Father and God the Son were two persons always in agreement and always working together (see especially John 1). Because the Bible teaches that Jesus is the only begotten Son of God the Father and He was conceived by the Holy Spirit in the virgin Mary, the Christian Church believes that Jesus is fully God and fully human. Believing in one God, the Christian Church believes in the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

(John 10:31) Again his Jewish opponents picked up stones to stone him,

Once again, the religious leaders heard enough to begin gathering stones to put Jesus to death for blasphemy according to their interpretations of the Law of God, but hurriedly and without a fair trial. But according to the Scriptures, Jesus would not die in this way. The Father and the Son working together saved Jesus from death by stoning, so Jesus could die on the cross as a sacrifice for our sins, be raised from the dead, and ascend into heaven to sit at the right hand of God until He comes again as He promised.

Questions for Discussion and Thinking Further

1. Why do you think Jesus refused to tell the Jewish religious leaders directly that He was the Messiah?
2. In whose name did Jesus do His works and why?
3. Why did the religious leaders refuse to believe Jesus?
4. What are three benefits when believers follow Jesus?
5. In whose hands are Jesus' sheep? Why is this important?

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