

The first part of Chapter 10 can be understood as continuing the discussion from the end of Chapter 9. Jesus has just healed the blind man, and has yet another confrontation with the Pharisees in Jerusalem. It is still immediately after the Feast of Tabernacles, usually occurring in the Fall, during our month of September or October. Jesus is teaching about Himself as the Good Shepherd, as prophesied in the Old Testament, further reinforcing His identity as the Messiah. This very apt comparison of Himself to a Shepherd, One who gives His life for His sheep, and His followers as sheep apparently continues later in the year (last part of this chapter) with yet another confrontation with the religious Jews. Their hatred for Him is becoming increasingly bitter, and will only end with Jesus on a Roman cross.

The concept of God being the Shepherd and us being sheep is a very appropriate analogy. Sheep are not the brightest of animals, and require constant tending and guidance. This theme runs throughout the Bible in various applications. The most well-known and beloved passage that speaks to this concept is the 23rd Psalm by David, another shepherd.



COMMENTARY: Years ago a Texas rancher told me about sheep. He said he had two thousand sheep, and someone had to be watching them all the time. If two little sheep go over the hill and get half a mile from the flock, they are lost. They cannot find their way back by themselves. The only way in the world they can be safe is for the shepherd to be there. If a wolf would come up and eat one of the little sheep, you'd think the other one would be smart enough to say, "He ate my little brother, so I'll go back over the hill and join the flock." No, he doesn't know where to go. All he does is go, "Baa," and run around and wait to be dessert for the wolf. A sheep is stupid. Neither has a sheep any way to defend himself. A sheep can't even outrun his enemy. If a sheep is safe, it is not because the sheep is clever or smart. It is because he has a good shepherd. (McGee)

PSALM 23: A Psalm of David.

The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want. He makes me to lie down in green pastures; He leads me beside the still waters. He restores my soul; He leads me in the paths of righteousness For His name's sake. Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for You are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me. You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; You anoint my head with oil; My cup runs over. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life; And I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever.

¹"Most assuredly, I say to you, he who does not enter the sheepfold by the door, but climbs up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber.

- **Sheepfolds were fenced or walled places, even caves, where all the local shepherds would bring their sheep for the night.** The walls were very high, usually with thorns at the top to discourage any thievery by humans or animals. This practice still exists in many places in the Middle East. A single door allowed entrance to the sheepfold, and was guarded at night by a watch shepherd, who often slept in the entrance for the sheep's protection, becoming the "door" to the fold.

- **Jesus uses an analogy that everyone then was familiar with.** He states the obvious about sheep and sheepfolds, but He is going to make a very rich and profound point. The religious Jews He spoke to were likened to the thieves and robbers of His story. They were avoiding the “door” to the sheep, which He will proclaim is Himself, the Messiah.

²*“But he who enters by the door is the shepherd of the sheep.”* ³*“To him the doorkeeper opens, and the sheep hear his voice; and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out.”*

- In the evening, after the sheep had been out to pasture during the day, the shepherds of the area would bring their sheep to the sheepfold for the night. The sheep were entrusted to the watch shepherd, and the day shepherds would go home to sleep. The next morning the shepherds would return to collect their sheep and return them to their pastures for grazing. The most remarkable part of this is that many herds of sheep were housed overnight in the sheepfold, yet there was no difficulty in matching up the shepherds with their individual flocks, simply because the sheep recognized the voice of their shepherds and would come when he called. Sheep from other herds would not respond. Sheep know the voice of their shepherd and follow him, and him alone. In order to gather their sheep, the shepherd would be allowed access by the one guarding the door to the sheepfold. This beautiful practice provides a wonderful analogy to Jesus as our Shepherd, and Israel as the His flock of sheep. But He also has other flocks...

- *“To him the doorkeeper opens...”* We can extend this analogy to include the Father as the owner of the sheepfold, and the Holy Spirit as the doorkeeper, or watch shepherd. The Holy Spirit allows Jesus access to the Father’s flock, Israel and the Jews. This sheepfold represents the nation of Israel. The Holy Spirit allows Jesus access to all hearts. He is the One who draws us to Him, since we would not come to Him by ourselves.



Ruins of ancient sheepfold

- **Jesus is speaking here about His flock of Israel, and the fact that He is the One authorized and allowed entry through the “door” to the sheepfold.** Anyone who doesn’t come by the door, but climbs in some other way, is a thief and a robber. Jesus states that He came in by the door – He is legally authorized to come in the right way. He came in fulfillment of all the Old Testament prophecies that were spoken about Him. This is in contrast to the Pharisees and other legalistic religious Jews, who were the “thieves and robbers” Jesus speaks of, trying to climb over the wall and not use the door (the Messiah).
- Unlike any of the religious Jews, **Jesus came according to prophecy**, through the line of David (Luke 1:32), born in Bethlehem (Micah 5:2), born of a virgin (Isaiah 7:14). And these are only a few of the more than three hundred prophecies Jesus literally and precisely fulfilled. No one else had His credentials.
- *“...the sheep hear his voice; and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out.”* The Jews who had faithfully studied the Word of God and all the prophecies about the Messiah, would have recognized Jesus as the fulfillment. He called, and many heard His voice and followed Him. But many did not. Those who did, were led from death to life.

⁴*“And when he brings out his own sheep, he goes before them; and the sheep follow him, for they know his voice.”* ⁵*“Yet they will by no means follow a stranger, but will flee from him, for they do not know the voice of strangers.”* ⁶*Jesus used this illustration, but they did not understand the things which He spoke to them.*

- **Sheep know only their own shepherd’s voice.** Sheep have a reputation for being notoriously “dense” (not particularly smart!). However, God has given them this remarkable ability to recognize their shepherd’s unique voice. In the Middle East several flocks that belonged to various shepherds would be brought into the one sheepfold, but the sheep would follow only the voice of their shepherd. They ignore, or flee from, everyone else. It is interesting to note that other animals, like cattle, can be driven, but sheep are led.
- There is another thing to be said about following your shepherd. He goes first. He clears the path of dangers and only leads his sheep into safe pastures. If we get ahead of the shepherd, we get into trouble. When we follow, we are safe.

▪ **COMMENTARY:** When I was near Bethlehem, I spent some time looking over a sheepfold that was still in use. A sheepfold is an enclosure where shepherds put their sheep for the night. The porter has charge of it. Then the shepherd spends the night in his own bed. When he comes to the sheepfold in the morning, his sheep are all mixed up with somebody else’s sheep—there is no brand or marking on the sheep. How does he get the sheep that are his? He calls them by name. The sheep don’t have to be identified; they know their shepherd’s voice. When he starts out over the hill, his own sheep come out of the fold and follow him. They know him. Our Lord says, “The sheep will follow him because they know his voice.” It is the most wonderful thing in the world to know that, when we give out the Word of God, Jesus is calling His sheep. The Spirit of God is the Porter who does the opening, and the sheep will hear. Our Lord will lead His sheep out of a legal system, perhaps even out of a church where they’re not being fed. They will follow Him. You cannot permanently fool God’s sheep. It is true that the sheep may get into a cult or an “ism” for a while, but the sheep will recognize the voice of the Shepherd. Unfortunately, many preachers are afraid to stand up for the truth; however, when a man preaches the Word of God, the sheep will hear it. We can depend on that because our Lord said, “My sheep hear my voice” (v. 27). (McGee)

- *“...they did not understand the things...”* Some, most likely the religious Jews, listening to the words of Jesus here heard Him clearly, but unfortunately they did not understand that Jesus was speaking of Himself as the Good Shepherd, the legitimate, authorized Shepherd. Why? Because they had listened to the voices of the “thieves and robbers” who deceived them, and not knowing the Truth, not having studied the words of the prophets sent by God to prepare the way of the Messiah, they were not able to truly hear their Shepherd. Instead, they became thieves and robbers themselves.

⁷*Then Jesus said to them again, “Most assuredly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep.”* ⁸*“All who ever came before Me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not hear them.”* ⁹*“I am the door. If anyone enters by Me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture.”* ¹⁰*“The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly.”* ¹¹*“I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd gives His life for the sheep.”*

- Jesus has just painted the beautiful picture of the sheepfold, and how this worked in the lives of shepherds and sheep. He spoke of the “door” to the sheepfold, and how only the authorized shepherd was given access. Now, to really bring home His point, Jesus refers to **Himself as the door for the sheep.** He is the way in to the safekeeping of the Good Shepherd, the enclosure of salvation.

- This passage contains the third and fourth **“I AM”** declarations of Jesus found in the Gospel of John. Jesus is the DOOR for the sheep. He is also the GOOD SHEPHERD.
- **“I am the door of the sheep.”** The door references the entrance to the sheepfold. Often the watch shepherd slept in the entrance, actually becoming the “gate” or “door” the only way into the sheepfold. Nothing and no one gained access to the sheep except through this shepherd. Neither could the sheep wander out. Jesus is the Way. He is the doorway out of the world and the clutches of sin and death, and He is the Way *in* to the Kingdom of God and eternal life.
- **“All who ever came before Me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not hear them.”** Anyone who came before Jesus to attempt to deceive the sheep were thieves and robbers, like these religious Jews. Thankfully, the Holy Spirit has given God’s sheep the ability to discern the voice of the Good Shepherd from the voice of the father of lies. Some sheep, however, can be willful and stubborn and insist on their own way. That way leads to death, for physical sheep, as well as spiritual sheep.
- **“The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy.”** This aptly describes the father of lies, the father Jesus has already indicated is the true father of these Pharisees.
- **“I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly.”** In contrast to the one who comes only to steal, kill and destroy the sheep, Jesus, the Good Shepherd comes to bring them life. Not just physical life, but eternal life with Him. The word used here for “more abundantly” is one that means “excessive,” over the top, life beyond compare.
- **“I am the good shepherd.”** Jesus also says: **“I AM** the good shepherd” (*that [I AM] good Shepherd!*) There are many other references in the OT about sheep and shepherds. It is a common analogy running throughout the entire Bible. The people at that time understood it better than we do. He is also called the “Chief Shepherd” (1 Peter 5:1-4). ***“To the elders among you, I appeal as a fellow elder, a witness of Christ's sufferings and one who also will share in the glory to be revealed: Be shepherds of God's flock that is under your care, serving as overseers--not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not greedy for money, but eager to serve; not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock. And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that will never fade away.”***
- **Ezekiel 34** gives us the scriptural background to this amazing claim of Jesus – that He is the GOOD Shepherd. It is also a passage in which God shames the “shepherds” of Israel, who are like these Pharisees, looking out only for themselves, with no concern or care for God’s sheep. Those who knew the scriptures would have known this passage, and should have “heard His voice” and recognized Him:

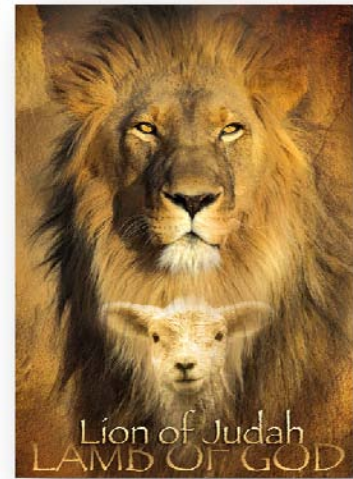
¹ And the word of the LORD came to me, saying, ²“Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel, prophesy and say to them, ‘Thus says the Lord GOD to the shepherds: “Woe to the shepherds of Israel who feed themselves! Should not the shepherds feed the flocks?” ³ You eat the fat and clothe yourselves with the wool; you slaughter the fatlings, but you do not feed the flock. ⁴ The weak you have not strengthened, nor have you healed those who were sick, nor bound up the broken, nor brought back what was driven away, nor sought what was lost; but with force and cruelty you have ruled them. ⁵ So they were scattered because there was no shepherd; and they became food for all the beasts of the field when they were scattered. ⁶ My sheep wandered through all the mountains, and on every high hill; yes, My flock was scattered over the whole face of the earth, and no one was seeking or searching for them.”’ ⁷ Therefore, you shepherds, hear the word of the LORD: ⁸“As I live,” says the Lord GOD, “surely because My flock became a prey, and My flock became food for every beast of the field, because there was no shepherd, nor did My shepherds search for My flock, but the shepherds fed themselves and did not feed My flock”— ⁹therefore, O shepherds, hear the word of the LORD!

¹⁰ Thus says the Lord GOD: “Behold, I am against the shepherds, and I will require My flock at their hand; I will cause them to cease feeding the sheep, and the shepherds shall feed themselves no more; for I will deliver My flock from their mouths, that they may no longer be food for them.”¹¹ “For thus says the Lord GOD: “Indeed I Myself will search for My sheep and seek them out.”¹² As a shepherd seeks out his flock on the day he is among his scattered sheep, so will I seek out My sheep and deliver them from all the places where they were scattered on a cloudy and dark day.”¹³ And I will bring them out from the peoples and gather them from the countries, and will bring them to their own land; I will feed them on the mountains of Israel, in the valleys and in all the inhabited places of the country.”¹⁴ I will feed them in good pasture, and their fold shall be on the high mountains of Israel. There they shall lie down in a good fold and feed in rich pasture on the mountains of Israel.”¹⁵ I will feed My flock, and I will make them lie down,” says the Lord GOD.”¹⁶ “I will seek what was lost and bring back what was driven away, bind up the broken and strengthen what was sick; but I will destroy the fat and the strong, and feed them in judgment.”¹⁷ “And as for you, O My flock, thus says the Lord GOD: “Behold, I shall judge between sheep and sheep, between rams and goats.”¹⁸ Is it too little for you to have eaten up the good pasture, that you must tread down with your feet the residue of your pasture—and to have drunk of the clear waters, that you must foul the residue with your feet?”¹⁹ And as for My flock, they eat what you have trampled with your feet, and they drink what you have fouled with your feet.”²⁰ “Therefore thus says the Lord GOD to them: “Behold, I Myself will judge between the fat and the lean sheep.”²¹ Because you have pushed with side and shoulder, butted all the weak ones with your horns, and scattered them abroad,”²² therefore I will save My flock, and they shall no longer be a prey; and I will judge between sheep and sheep.”²³ I will establish one shepherd over them, and he shall feed them—My servant David. He shall feed them and be their shepherd.”²⁴ And I, the LORD, will be their God, and My servant David a prince among them; I, the LORD, have spoken.”²⁵ “I will make a covenant of peace with them, and cause wild beasts to cease from the land; and they will dwell safely in the wilderness and sleep in the woods.”²⁶ I will make them and the places all around My hill a blessing; and I will cause showers to come down in their season; there shall be showers of blessing.”²⁷ Then the trees of the field shall yield their fruit, and the earth shall yield her increase. They shall be safe in their land; and they shall know that I am the LORD, when I have broken the bands of their yoke and delivered them from the hand of those who enslaved them.”²⁸ And they shall no longer be a prey for the nations, nor shall beasts of the land devour them; but they shall dwell safely, and no one shall make them afraid.”²⁹ I will raise up for them a garden of renown, and they shall no longer be consumed with hunger in the land, nor bear the shame of the Gentiles anymore.”³⁰ Thus they shall know that I, the LORD their God, am with them, and they, the house of Israel, are My people,” says the Lord GOD.”³¹ “You are My flock, the flock of My pasture; you are men, and I am your God,” says the Lord GOD.”



- **The good shepherd gives His life for the sheep.** Jesus is not only extending his analogy to a shepherd who gives his life to protect his sheep (*something that was not uncommon in those days, when shepherds had to battle wild animals and thieves*) He was also predicting His own death by crucifixion in just a few short months. He stands in stark contrast to the Pharisees who not only climb over the wall to steal and harm the sheep, they are also plotting to kill the Good Shepherd, the One who is the legal owner of the sheep. **They are living examples of the evil false shepherds described in Ezekiel 34.**
- **HE IS NOT ONLY THE SHEPHERD, BUT ALSO THE LAMB OF GOD!** This is one of those difficult to understand truths about our God. He is the Good Shepherd, yet He is also the Lamb of God (John 1:29). He is the Shepherd sent by God to lead us to God’s salvation and safekeeping, but He is also the lamb God sent as a *sacrifice* for our sins. The Lamb makes Him like us, sheep. It speaks of His humanity. The “Good Shepherd” speaks of His deity.

- **Only this Shepherd can save us.** Only GOD can save us. *(It is also interesting to note that Jesus is both High Priest who offers the sacrifice before God for our sins, and He is also the sacrifice itself! We cannot fully understand these concepts, but we can believe and trust them, and Him.)* This Shepherd, who came the first time to offer Himself as a defenseless, meek Lamb of God, is also the Lion of the Tribe of Judah. When He comes again He will roar in power and glory.



¹²*“But a hireling, he who is not the shepherd, one who does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and flees; and the wolf catches the sheep and scatters them.*

¹³*“The hireling flees because he is a hireling and does not care about the sheep. ¹⁴“I am the good shepherd; and I know My*

sheep, and am known by My own. ¹⁵“As the Father knows Me, even so I know the Father; and I lay down My life for the sheep.

- A “hireling” is a servant, or one who is paid to look after the sheep. He is not the shepherd, and not the owner of the sheep. Because he does not have the concern or care for the sheep that the owner does, he will run away in times of danger, leaving the sheep defenseless and in danger. The hireling is only working for pay, and he doesn’t love the sheep. It can be stated that many of those who seek to lead God’s people, whether in established “good” churches, or cults, are like the hireling, leading only for the fame, power, money and pride of it. Many of these people get rich off their people, never really caring for them. This could be said of the Pharisees as well.
- **This is a contrasting statement.** The Good Shepherd knows His sheep and cares for them, even to the point of dying for them as opposed to the hireling who is only interested in himself.
- **“I am the good shepherd;...”** Jesus restates His “I AM statement.” Notice “the” good shepherd here. Not “A” good shepherd, but THE good shepherd. This is a reference that almost every Jew would understand. Jesus is clearly identifying Himself with the promised good shepherd of Old Testament scriptures. He is not just any good shepherd. Many today say Jesus was a good teacher, even a good man. But that is all that He was. However, Jesus says He is more than any good shepherd, more than any good teacher, more than any good man. He is THE ONE promised throughout the scriptures to deliver all mankind from their sins. He is the Messiah, He is the I AM.
- **“...and am known by My own.”** God promises that if we truly and honestly seek Him, we will find Him. Those who are looking for God will find and know their Shepherd. They will know His voice. They know they belong to Him.
- Jesus once again, as He does many times in these confrontations with the religious Jews, **underscores His oneness with the Father**, Almighty God. And, He once again states that He will in fact die for His people. Those who were paying attention, listening with hungry hearts seeking God, would have understood these words. They would perhaps be shocked about his repeated reference to dying for them, but they would understand Him as their Shepherd. Many of the people in these crowds did understand, and did “know” Him.

¹⁶*“And other sheep I have which are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and they will hear My voice; and there will be one flock and one shepherd.”* ¹⁷*“Therefore My Father loves Me, because I lay down My life that I may take it again.”* ¹⁸*“No one takes it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This command I have received from My Father.”*

- *“...other sheep I have which are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and they will hear My voice; and there will be one flock and one shepherd.”* Every Gentile should be grateful for this verse! The sheepfold Jesus spoke of was Israel, God’s covenanted and chosen people. Everyone else was “Gentile”—other sheep, not of that fold. Gentiles are grateful that Jesus did not just come to save His people, the Jews. He came for the entire world, even if Gentiles are not part of that sheepfold called Israel. There will be the one flock containing Jew and Gentile, rich and poor, bond and free, male and female, black and white, people from every nation and out of every tongue and tribe.
- *“I lay down My life that I may take it again.”* Jesus is making some astounding statements here, which were most likely not at all understood in the moment. Not only will He die, but He will live again. And, He will do this Himself. He will allow Himself to die, and He will take up His life again, by His power. He predicting not only his death by crucifixion, but also His resurrection. This statement by itself clearly states His deity, and His claims to equality with God. Anne Graham Lotz said that Jesus could not be killed. Yes, He would die, but no one can kill God. She says He simply refused to take the next breath, and allowed Himself to die. That is exactly what He is stating here. No one does this TO him. He laid down His life willingly, by His own power, and He raised it up again, by His own power.
- Jesus was in full control of His death, and His resurrection. He even orchestrated the details that would fulfill the prophecies about Him. Why would He do this? There is only one answer – Love. The writer of Hebrews states: *“Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame ...”* (Hebrews 12:2) Now what could bring Him joy enough to want to suffer in this way? **YOU!!**
- **The Good Shepherd will return one day.** He will then gather His entire flock into one fold. Until then, He will search for and pursue every lost sheep (Matthew 18:12-14). And eventually we “will dwell in the house of the LORD forever.” (Psalm 23:6) AMEN!

¹⁹*Therefore there was a division again among the Jews because of these sayings.* ²⁰*And many of them said, “He has a demon and is mad. Why do you listen to Him?”* ²¹*Others said, “These are not the words of one who has a demon. Can a demon open the eyes of the blind?”*

- *“...a division again among the Jews because of these sayings.”* We are told several times that there was a division forming between the people about Jesus. Even among the Pharisees, Jesus’ primary source of opposition. Some of these Pharisees became true believers. They saw the obvious signs and believed Him to be the Messiah. Others saw the same signs, but remained blind.
- **The Pharisees will call Jesus every name in the book.** They will insult Him and compare Him to demon possessed Samaritans – about the worst thing you could say about anyone in those days. But those whose eyes were open could see that He did things that only God could do.
- Again the people are impressed by the miracle of healing the blind man. This miracle seems to have left a greater impression on the people than others, perhaps. We hear often of references by the Jews to this miracle.

- **C.S. Lewis said that Jesus is either LORD, LUNATIC, or LIAR.** In his book “Mere Christianity,” he makes this statement, *“A man who was merely a man and said the sort of things Jesus said would not be a great moral teacher. He would either be a lunatic - on the level with a man who says he is a poached egg - or he would be the devil of hell. You must take your choice. Either this was, and is, the Son of God, or else a madman or something worse. You can shut Him up for a fool or you can fall at His feet and call Him Lord and God. But let us not come with any patronizing nonsense about His being a great human teacher. He has not left that open to us.”* Jesus is either LORD, the Savior of all mankind, or He is a madman, or a terrible liar. A madman or a liar could not do the things He did, including laying down His life, and taking it back up again. We decide if He will be our Lord. Some will hear and receive, others will hear and reject. Some are sheep, and some are not.
- **COMMENTARY: The so-called liberal theologians are the most inconsistent and illogical people. Jesus Christ cannot be only a good teacher and a great example. He is either a fraud or He is the Son of God. Jesus Christ puts you on the horns of a dilemma... He is a madman or He is your God and your Savior. (McGee)**
- Now we have a break between the first part of this chapter, and the latter part. The first belongs with the continuing discussion Jesus had with the Pharisees about the healing of the blind man. Some time passes here, but the discussion and controversy continues.

²²*Now it was the Feast of Dedication in Jerusalem, and it was winter.* ²³*And Jesus walked in the temple, in Solomon’s porch.* ²⁴*Then the Jews surrounded Him and said to Him, “How long do You keep us in doubt? If You are the Christ, tell us plainly.”* ²⁵*Jesus answered them, “I told you, and you do not believe. The works that I do in My Father’s name, they bear witness of Me.* ²⁶*“But you do not believe, because you are not of My sheep, as I said to you.* ²⁷*“My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me.*

- **About 2 months have passed.** (From Feast of Tabernacles [Sept/Oct.] to the Feast of Dedication [December]). “The Feast of Dedication” is not a commanded feast (*not one of the original 7 Feasts of Israel as found in Leviticus and Exodus*), but began as a memorial celebration of the re-dedication of the temple by Judas Maccabaeus in December, 164 B.C., after Antiochus Epiphanes desecrated it in 167 B.C. We know it today as Hanukkah, or the Feast of Lights, which celebrates the fact that a one-day supply of oil to keep the menorah (the large lampstand in the Holy Place in the temple) lighted (commanded by God) lasted for 8 days, long enough to recreate and dedicate a new supply of oil). As a good practicing Jew, Jesus celebrated all the feasts and festivals of the Jews, even this one, which is not commanded in scripture.
- We are also told exactly where Jesus was teaching. Solomon’s Porch was a large area for the Gentiles, those outside the nation of Israel. He is specifically talking about sheep outside His fold, and it is important for His teaching to be heard and understood by those Gentiles.
- **“...and it was winter...” COMMENTARY: “And it was winter.” ... It is now too late for the harvest. The Lamb of God is being shut up in preparation to go to the Cross and die for the sins of the world. Friend, may I remind you that you can play at this thing too long. Winter is coming for you. There will come a day when you won’t be able to witness. If you are going to do anything for Him, you had better do it now. If you have never sincerely accepted Jesus Christ as your Savior, may I remind you that winter can come for that, too. There does come a time when it is too late, my beloved, too late to be saved. You can persist in rejecting the Lord Jesus Christ so long that finally you will be unable to accept Him. The prophet spoke of this eventuality: “The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved” (Jer. 8:20). (McGee)**

- The arrogant “Jews” (the religious rulers) are there again, always watching, always waiting for a moment to trip Him up. Some speculate that the word **“surrounded”** indicates that they had evil intention of physical violence here. They were angry enough to perhaps stone Him if they had the opportunity, even though it was forbidden by Rome. If they were quick and clever enough, Rome might never know.
- **“How long do You keep us in doubt? If You are the Christ, tell us plainly.”** Jesus had **already made His identity very clear**, to those who were listening, and those who accepted Him understood He was the Messiah. Andrew told his brother, **“We have found the Messiah!”** (John 1:41). Nathanael recognized Him, **“Rabbi, you are the Son of God; you are the King of Israel.”** (John 1:49). The Samaritan woman finally understood He was the Messiah for all people, and the Samaritan men said, **“We no longer believe just because of what you said; now we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this man really is the Savior of the world.”** (John 4:42). The man healed of his blindness believed and worshiped Him. These remarks are evidence that both Jews and Gentiles heard Him and knew who He was. These Pharisees were not only blind, they were spiritually deaf as well.
- **“I told you, and you do not believe. The works that I do in My Father’s name, they bear witness of Me.”** Jesus responds that He has already told them, repeatedly, and that the things He does in does with His Father’s authority, and all of these thing bear witness to His identity. His WORDS indicated He was the Messiah, His LIFE and WORKS demonstrated and confirmed it. But still the Pharisees would not believe. Their hearts were too hard; they were too self involved. The problem for these Pharisees then, and unbelievers today is not in Jesus’ lack of credentials. Those are without question. The problem is the unbelieving, hard heart.
- **“But you do not believe, because you are not of My sheep, as I said to you.”**²⁷**“My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me.”** Again Jesus says these religious Jews who dogged Him to trip Him up are not His sheep. They are not part of another sheepfold, a the Gentiles are, they flat out aren’t His sheep because they don’t recognize His voice.
- It is interesting to note that Jesus **seemed to talk in plainer language** to those who didn’t have the scriptural background and supposed “wisdom” of the legalistic Jews (including the Samaritans and Gentiles). With them He plainly said He was the Messiah. But to the Jews, he DEMONSTRATED it, so that they would recognize Him from the promises of Scripture. They rejected Him not because He didn’t provide adequate proof of His identity. They rejected Him because they could not see the truth through their pride.
- His responses so far are merely to confront the Pharisees with the truth of their spiritual blindness. Now Jesus will begin teaching again of His purpose in coming. The Pharisees are “dismissed” here.

²⁸**“And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand.”**²⁹**“My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of My Father’s hand.”**³⁰**“I and My Father are one.”**



- Jesus has already spoken of His coming to bring eternal life, a life that will never end. Now He speaks of the “security” of that life and salvation. This is what we call the doctrine of eternal security.

- **The Doctrine of eternal security**

- ***“...and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand.”*** Not only does Jesus promise eternal life with Him, stating that we will never perish, He also states this is for sure, a guarantee because we can never be snatched from His hand. And we must remember that nothing and no one can rob us of this eternal salvation once we have placed our believe and trust in Jesus. That means EVEN WE CAN’T DO IT! That’s something to think about!
- The Greek used a double negative here, so it should read “They shall never, ever perish.” No words could provide a stronger promise. When God saves, He saves completely; and because He initiates salvation, He carries it to its fullness. We rest secure in the hands of both the Father and the Son.
- ***“...and no one is able to snatch them out of My Father’s hand...”*** Not only can we not be snatched from Jesus’ hand, we cannot be snatched out of the Father’s hand. Those are some pretty powerful sets of hands we are in. These statements certainly sound like the believer is given “eternal security” the assurance of always saved, not subject to being snatched away.
- **COMMENTARY:** This is one of the clearest statements in the Bible that one who believes in Jesus for salvation will never be lost. Believers sin and stumble, but Jesus as the perfect Shepherd loses none of His flock (Luke 22:31-32). Eternal life is a gift (John 3:16, John 3:36; John 5:24; John 10:10; Romans 6:23). If one has it, he has it eternally. They shall never perish is a strong affirmation in the Greek: “they will indeed not ever perish”. The security of the sheep is found in the ability of the Shepherd to defend and preserve His flock. Such security does not depend on the ability of the frail sheep. No one can even snatch His sheep out of His hand. (Walvoord and Zuck)
- **COMMENTARY:** Will some backslide? Yes. Will they perish? No. The sheep may get into a pigpen, but there has never yet been a sheep in a pigpen that stayed in a pigpen. Sheep and pigs do not live together. The sheep is always a sheep. No man can pluck that sheep out of the Savior’s hand. No enemy, no man, no created being (this means even you can’t do it yourself!) can pluck them out of His hand. This is wonderful! (McGee)
- **Once again Jesus reaffirms the essential unity of the Father and the Son.** They can’t be separated. Jesus is the I AM. Now it seems they are getting the “plainness” of speech that they desired. Jesus couldn’t be much plainer than this. This is a clear indication of His deity, but still their hardened hearts prevent them from hearing. To them, this was blasphemy.

³¹*Then the Jews took up stones again to stone Him.* ³²*Jesus answered them, “Many good works I have shown you from My Father. For which of those works do you stone Me?”* ³³*The Jews answered Him, saying, “For a good work we do not stone You, but for blasphemy, and because You, being a Man, make Yourself God.”*

- ***“Then the Jews took up stones again to stone Him....”*** As indicated earlier, these Jews may have surrounded Jesus for the single purpose of stoning Him once they found something to accuse Him of. Now they had it. Jesus equated Himself with the Father again – pure blasphemy to them. Since they had surrounded Him already, it didn’t take much to push them over the edge. They were willing to risk discovery and punishment by Rome in order to get rid of Him.
- ***“Many good works I have shown you from My Father. For which of those works do you stone Me?”*** The intent of the Pharisees is quite obvious, enough to cause Jesus to question their motives and justification for stoning Him. In the past they have objected to his healing on the Sabbath. He asks which of His works they are using as justification for stoning Him. But they respond that it isn’t about His works, but His claims.

- **The Jews knew exactly what Jesus was saying.** There was no question about the fact that He was clearly calling Himself God, equal in every way to the Father. They understood this. Many people today don't seem to understand that. Some say Jesus never claimed to be God. Those who say this have never read the book of John, and simply refuse to accept this fact, just as the Pharisees did. They understood Jesus' claims perfectly, and that is their reasoning for killing Him. However, their reasons were more personal (Jesus' threat to their power and pride) than scriptural. Their statement "You...make Yourself God" reveals that they had understanding of Jesus' words. Their hearts, however, simply refused to accept the Truth.
- The level of hatred for Jesus by these Pharisees is reflected in their readiness to stone Him. **The Romans did not allow the Jews to stone anyone**, or perform any kind of capital punishment. At this point, however, the Pharisees were so enraged they didn't care. This "man" angered them to the point of irrationality. They had been challenged, and now they wanted this One who so expertly confronted them dead.
- Stoning was dictated in scripture, but only for the most serious of sins in the Mosaic Law, and only after the testimony of at least two witnesses. **Sins that warranted stoning included:**
 - child sacrifice (Leviticus 20:2)
 - consultation with mediums and occultists (20:27)
 - blasphemy (24:16)
 - Sabbath-breaking (Numbers 15:32–36);
 - worship of false gods (Deut. 13:10);
 - rebellion against parents (21:21).
 - adultery (Ezekiel 16:40);
 - other certain cases of deliberate disobedience

³⁴*Jesus answered them, "Is it not written in your law, 'I said, "You are gods" '?"* ³⁵*"If He called them gods, to whom the word of God came (and the Scripture cannot be broken),"* ³⁶*"do you say of Him whom the Father sanctified and sent into the world, 'You are blaspheming,' because I said, 'I am the Son of God'?"*

- **Jesus quotes Psalm 82** here, especially verse 6: *"¹God presides in the great assembly; he gives judgment among the "gods": ²"How long will you defend the unjust and show partiality to the wicked? Selah ³Defend the cause of the weak and fatherless; maintain the rights of the poor and oppressed. ⁴Rescue the weak and needy; deliver them from the hand of the wicked. ⁵"They know nothing, they understand nothing. They walk about in darkness; all the foundations of the earth are shaken. ⁶"I said, 'You are "gods"; you are all sons of the Most High.' ⁷But you will die like mere men; you will fall like every other ruler." ⁸Rise up, O God, judge the earth, for all the nations are your inheritance.*
- **'I said, "You are gods" '** It is vital for us to understand exactly what the Psalmist is saying here. The use of the word "gods" to describe some men **does NOT indicate that mortals can become "gods" or anywhere close to God in His nature or essence.** This word, which is actually *elohim* in the Hebrew, the plural form of "God" (*also used of the triune nature of God Himself*) is used by the psalmist here to indicate the human judges and authorities God Almighty has placed on earth to stand as His representatives, hence the use of "gods." These judges are in a sense standing in for Him and doing His will, acting as judges (arbitrators, etc.) among the people. In Psalm 82 God indicates that He is actually judging the judges now, and is not at all happy with their "judgments." He provides them instruction. The phrase *"You are 'gods,' you are all sons of the Most High"* means that those God has appointed are acting as His "sons" (in His authority) to accomplish the business and will of the supreme God. The psalmist pointedly remarks, however, that they are mere men and they will die like men. They may have thought they were gods, but they will die like men. The psalmist then calls upon the Most High God to judge the earth, instead of these "gods."

- Jesus used this passage to indicate that the **Pharisees were not justified in becoming offended when Jesus used the term “Son of God.”** If they did not object to the language of Psalm 82, why were they objecting to the language Jesus used to describe himself? In many ways, this is somewhat of a “trick” question. First, it is highly likely that Jesus also meant to compare these self-righteous Pharisees, the current judges of Israel, with those who were being condemned in Psalm 82. It is also a warning to them that though they thought of themselves literally as “gods,” they were mere men and would die as men – in their sins, if they did not come to Him. Obviously, the Pharisees had no logical response to Jesus’ challenge. They could only respond in anger.
- As the divine author of all scripture, Jesus **always demonstrated His complete knowledge of the Old Testament writings** – right down to the tiniest details in the most obscure of passages.
- **“(and the Scripture cannot be broken)”** This is a definitive statement of the inerrancy and perfection, and lasting forever status, of the Word of God, by the Author of that Word. There is nothing in scripture that can be “broken,” negated, or considered not perfect and true.
- **“...do you say of Him whom the Father sanctified and sent into the world,...”** This statement indicates that Jesus has been sent and “set apart” for His unique ministry in the world by the Father, the Most High God, Himself. He is saying that the challenge of the Pharisees is incorrect. Jesus carries in Himself the seal of authority of the Father.

³⁷*“If I do not do the works of My Father, do not believe Me; ³⁸“but if I do, though you do not believe Me, believe the works, that you may know and believe that the Father is in Me, and I in Him.” ³⁹Therefore they sought again to seize Him, but He escaped out of their hand. ⁴⁰And He went away again beyond the Jordan to the place where John was baptizing at first, and there He stayed. ⁴¹Then many came to Him and said, “John performed no sign, but all the things that John spoke about this Man were true.” ⁴²And many believed in Him there.*

- The pure logic of Jesus’ statements is beautiful. He again challenges these Pharisees by saying that if what He does is not the direct will of His Father, then don’t believe Him. **“But if I do...”** is the real challenge. If what He does matches the Word of God, is what is supposed to be done by the Messiah, are signs of His identity, then believe those things. Believe the works He does, even if they don’t believe Him directly. Even in this, **Jesus is the God who desires that none perish.** He may have confronted them, been angered by them, but He still loves them. Amazing grace.
- This, however, just **sent them over the edge again** and once again they tried to capture and stone Him. How many times now has Jesus enraged the Pharisees and religious officials to the point of an irrational desire to kill Him, only to simply disappear from them? It is almost humorous, and another very pointed reminder that God has a perfect plan that will not and cannot be derailed or changed by anyone. There was a perfect time (Passover) for Jesus to die, and it wasn’t here, and it wasn’t time.
- After this series of confrontations, **Jesus seems to retire from the very public and volatile Jerusalem. He continues His ministry near the Jordan River** where John the Baptist had been baptizing. The crowds continued to follow Him and be changed by Him. The crowds remember what John had to say about this “man” and many believed in Him. While the crowds of commoners continue to listen and believe, the religious Jews of Jerusalem were plotting to kill Him. It would only be a few months away from this point.

