

John 10 - The Good Shepherd Discourse; Eternal Security; Two Attempts to Kill Jesus

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John 10

(18) The Good Shepherd Discourse (10:1-18)

The events of this chapter flow logically from those of the previous chapter...now that the man born blind was brought into the sheepfold, we have a description of Jesus as the Good Shepherd and what this new sheepfold that He is raising up represents.

In v1-6 Jesus gives us a Shepherd-sheep metaphor (using a picture to illustrate a point) of His relationship to Israel in the first century. A number of owners would hold sheep in a single sheepfold, and when an owner wanted to remove His own sheep, he gave a distinctive call/whistle. When his sheep heard this, they immediately followed him.

In v6, His audience does not understand the metaphor, so Jesus explains it more fully in v7-18. Once Jesus gives them v18, the people have a choice to make: to believe or to not believe. Jesus' teaching in John's Gospel always comes down to a choice of belief or unbelief. In v19-21 we see the mixed reaction to Jesus' teaching. John keeps bringing up this mixed reaction because he wants to force upon us a choice...to believe or not to believe, will we trust in what Jesus has done or will we reject the message.

Jesus had just taken a man from Israel (a Jew) and brought him into His sheepfold. So the sheepfold that Jesus begins to reveal in v1-6 refers to Israel and how Jesus is calling out of that sheepfold His own sheep (the remnant). The metaphor changes in v7 because Jesus is no longer talking about Israel as a whole, but His own personal sheepfold...those sheep that He has called and who have followed Him out of the sheepfold of Israel that housed the sheep of many owners and He put them into His own sheepfold.

In v7-10, Jesus gives instructions on how to get into His personal sheepfold. The only way is through the "door" which is Christ. In v11-18, Jesus uses a second metaphor ("Good Shepherd") to explain what life is like in His personal sheepfold.

(A) Metaphor given (10:1-6)

1 "Truly, truly I say to you, the one who does not enter by the door into the fold of the sheep, but climbs up some other way, he is a thief and a robber.

1 "Truly, truly, I say to you, he who does not enter by the door into the fold of the sheep, but climbs up some other way, he is a thief and a robber.

1 "Truly, I tell all of you emphatically, the person who doesn't enter the sheepfold through the gate, but climbs in by some other way, is a thief and a bandit.

1 Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber.

- Jesus begins to describe this sheepfold...it has the idea of a pen of some sort where the sheep are protected and can't get out. The only way in and out of this sheepfold is this "door."

— What Jesus also begins to describe is that there are teachers or religious leaders in the sheepfold of Israel that God never authorized, because they did not enter the sheepfold in the proper way (through the door)

— Instead of entering through the door, they climbed up another way. Jesus reveals that those who do not enter via the door are thieves and robbers.

— Jesus characterizes the Pharisees and religious leaders of His day as no more than thieves and robbers. He labeled them as such because they were not authorized by God, but instead entered the sheepfold by some other means.

— If you know the OT, you recognize that this imagery of the leaders of Israel is not new (Cf. Ezek 34:1-10; Jer 23:1-4). Ezekiel prophesied against them in the same way as Jesus does here in the 6th century BC.

- Numerous times in the OT, God gives a performance appraisal of the religious leaders of Israel, just like Jesus does here for the Pharisees, and it's never positive because they were using the people of God to promote themselves

— These religious leaders, including the Pharisees, were not interested in feeding the flock of God, they were interested in fleecing the flock of God. The flock of God was sick and injured, and they did nothing to help them. All they cared about was how they could use the flock of God to promote their own personal agenda.

— It's easy to differentiate false shepherds from the True Shepherd...false shepherds are all about themselves. They use the sheep to promote their own agenda, using the people of God for money, to promote best selling books, to pack out conference halls and seminars, etc. These things in and of themselves are not wrong, but it's all about the motive of the heart.

— The True Shepherd is always focused on the sheep. A True Shepherd will tell you the truth at the risk of offense; a false shepherd will water things down so as to not offend.

2 But the one who enters by the door is a shepherd of the sheep.

2 But he who enters by the door is a shepherd of the sheep.

2 The one who enters through the gate is the shepherd of the sheep.

2 But he that entereth in by the door is the shepherd of the sheep.

- In contrast to these false shepherds who climbed the fence or entered in some other way except for by the door, Jesus says I Myself entered by the door. I was authorized by the Father to enter the sheepfold, and I entered it the proper way.

— These other false shepherds were not authorized by the Father, thus they entered the wrong way

3 To him the **doorkeeper** opens, and the sheep listen to his voice, and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out.

3 To him the doorkeeper opens, and the sheep hear his voice, and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out.

3 It's to him the gatekeeper opens the gate, and it's his voice the sheep hear. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out.

3 To him the porter openeth; and the sheep hear his voice: and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out.

- Pay close attention to the imagery here...

- "...doorkeeper" - the person hired to protect the sheep from their enemies (wolves, etc.)

— In the 1st century, the sheep in a sheepfold were owned by multiple owners; owner A owned flock A, owner B owned flock B, and so on, and in some occasions all of these sheep owned by different owners were kept in the same pen/sheepfold

— Upon entering the pen, the shepherd would call his own sheep and the sheep would hear his voice and come to him immediately. He had a distinctive whistle or call that his sheep would recognize and obey. The other sheep did not respond to that shepherd because they did not recognize the call.

— Thus, the shepherd would take his own sheep out from among the others and leave the others behind

- In this context, the "doorkeeper" is John the Baptist. He identified for Israel (the sheepfold) who Jesus was; he is the one who authenticated Jesus as deity. This authentication never went out to Israel of any other religious leader, including the Pharisees, but it went out about Christ.

— When that authentication went out about Jesus Christ from John the Baptist, Jesus went into that sheepfold (representing the nation of Israel) and issued His distinctive call, and those sheep who recognized His call followed (believed in) Christ. In fact, this is exactly what happened to the man born blind in John 9, as well as many other times as documented in John's Gospel.

— Which sheep belong to Jesus? All that that the Father gives to Me (Cf. 6:37). There are those within the nation of Israel who belong to Jesus Christ because the Father gave those people to Him. Jesus is their Shepherd because they have been given to Him by God the Father, and when He makes a distinctive sound or voice, His sheep immediately recognize Him and follow Him.

4 When he puts all his own *sheep* outside, he goes ahead of them, and the sheep follow him because they know his voice.

4 When he puts forth all his own, he goes ahead of them, and the sheep follow him because they know his voice.

4 When he has driven out all his own, he goes ahead of them, and the sheep follow him because they recognize his voice.

4 And when he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him: for they know his voice.

- Now Jesus begins to describe His relationship with His sheep...

— The Shepherd (Jesus) goes ahead of them (leads them) and the sheep follow

— This is not typically how sheep were corralled or guided in the 1st century...typically there were sheepdogs who surrounded the sheep and drove them forward. In this case, Jesus is out front and the sheep are following Him because they know His voice.

— These sheep recognize His voice and follow Him; they will not follow a false shepherd because they do not recognize his voice

5 However, a stranger they simply will not follow, but will flee from him, because they do not know the voice of strangers."

5 A stranger they simply will not follow, but will flee from him, because they do not know the voice of strangers."

5 They'll never follow a stranger, but will run away from him because they don't recognize the voice of strangers."

5 And a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him: for they know not the voice of strangers.

- The voice (teachings) of a false shepherd doesn't sound right. Consequently, the Pharisees who were giving all of these strange teachings may have had control of the majority of the population, but this minority, the ones whom the Father had given to the Son (Cf. v3; 6:37) were never in full allegiance with these false shepherds. They were just waiting to hear the shepherding voice that they would recognize and understand.

Keep in mind that Jesus is using a metaphor here, which demonstrates one form of similarity, not every instance or situation. Jesus here is giving a general truth, not giving us all of the exceptions to it. There are those today who teach that if you are a sheep of the Shepherd, you'll always follow the Shepherd instinctively. While that is true in most situations, it's not a blanket truth...there are exceptions, which Jesus does not explain here because He's giving us a metaphor.

The idea that the sheep always instinctively follow their Shepherd is a general truth, but not true in every situation:

1. If you watch a shepherd tend sheep, most of the sheep are near him but there are always some stragglers. That is why the shepherd has the big stick with a hook on the end in order to pull in or discipline a wayward sheep.

2. If a Christian could never follow false teaching, then why does the NT warn us over and over and over again to be careful of false teachers? Why would Paul admonish the Ephesian church for three years to beware of false teachers (Acts 20:28-31)? (See notes on Acts 20:30 for examples of false teachers who came from Ephesus, as well as other NT examples). Why would Paul tell us to put on the whole armor of God (Eph 6:10-18), much of which is meant to protect us from false doctrine?

6 Jesus told them this figure of speech, but they did not understand what the things which He was saying to them meant.

6 This figure of speech Jesus spoke to them, but they did not understand what those things were which He had been saying to them.

6 Jesus used this illustration with them, but they didn't understand what he was saying to them.

6 This parable spake Jesus unto them: but they understood not what things they were which he spake unto them.

- Jesus uses a metaphor in v1-5, but they did not understand what He meant, so He goes on to explain it in further detail...

(B) Metaphor explained (10:7-18)

At this point, the metaphor shifts: in v1-4 the sheepfold was Israel, and Jesus was calling His sheep (those whom the Father gave Him) out of the sheepfold. The Pharisees were the thieves and robbers.

Now, after His hearers wanted some additional information about the Shepherd and the sheep, the metaphor changes slightly where Jesus is no longer talking about calling His sheep out of unbelieving Israel, but He is talking about His own sheep. What is Jesus Christ's relationship to His own sheep? What is the relationship of a Shepherd to His sheep, who are entirely His, in the sheepfold that is entirely His (not in a sheepfold where His sheep are mixed with other owners).

In the process of His explanation, He will clarify how His status as a Shepherd differed radically and drastically from the shepherds His audience had become accustomed to in first century Israel. Jesus will begin to unfold a distinction of motives between Himself and Israel's religious leaders.

(a) Door (10:7-10)

7 So Jesus said to them again, "Truly, truly I say to you, **I am the door of the sheep.**

7 So Jesus said to them again, "Truly, truly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep.

7 So again Jesus said, "Truly, I tell all of you emphatically, I'm the gate for the sheep.

7 Then said Jesus unto them again, **Verily, verily, I say unto you, I am the door of the sheep.**

- In the previous metaphor (10:3), John the Baptist was the doorkeeper. Now Jesus changes the metaphor slightly and now Jesus is the door.

- "...I am" - Jesus uses this term on its own, which is a claim to deity (Cf. 8:58); he also uses it in metaphorical language, language of comparison, such as here and when He said "I am the Bread of Life" (Cf. 6:35) or "I am the Light of the world" (Cf. 8:12).

— By claiming to be the "Bread of Life" He is claiming to be the spiritual nourishment that all men need; by claiming to be the "Light of the world" He is the One who allows us to see and perceive spiritual things.

- "...the door" - the way of entry; notice the definite article "the"; He is not "a" gate to His sheepfold, meaning one of many. He is "the" gate, indicating that there is only one door.

— If you want to be in His sheepfold, there is one path to enter: by the door, which is by and through Jesus Christ (Cf. 14:6; Acts 4:12; 1 Tim 2:5). The *only* pathway to God the Father is through God the Son.

— To believe, or even hint at, the thought that Jesus is "a" way to the Father instead of "the" way to the Father is to trivialize the sufferings and death of Jesus. Thanks Jesus for the 39 lashes, but I'm going to try this other way. Heresy! Thanks Jesus for the crown of thorns and the spear in Your side, but I think this new way to the Father is better for me. Thanks Jesus for enduring the ridicule, for being stripped naked, having your beard pulled out by hand, being hated and abused. Thanks Jesus for the nails you took in the hands and feet, but I like this other way better.

— What a blasphemous thing to say or think. It took the sufferings of Jesus Christ to procure so great a salvation for us, and to believe or think of any other way leaves His suffering as less consequence or no consequence in our lives.

— If there was any other way that the salvation of man could be procured without Jesus going to the cross, Jesus would have avoided it. In fact that was His prayer in Gethsemane, Father, if there is any other way, let this cup pass from Me, nevertheless not My will but Your will be done (Matt 26:39).

8 **All those who came before Me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not listen to them.**

8 **All who came before Me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not hear them.**

8 **All who came before me are thieves and bandits, but the sheep didn't listen to them.**

8 **All that ever came before me are thieves and robbers: but the sheep did not hear them.**

- Jesus now contrasts His motives with the other (false) shepherds...

— Jesus' assessment of the religious leaders of first century Israel: they are thieves and robbers; they are exploiters, only out for themselves and they couldn't care less about the

sheep other than that they fall in line and obey

— These religious leaders hated Jesus Christ with a white-hot passion for one and only one reason: He was a threat to the power establishment, and these leaders loved the place of prominence and influence that they had. They loved the power that they wielded over the masses, and they were not going to allow some guy from Nazareth mess this whole thing up.

— Because Jesus challenged the power of the establishment and the agenda of man throughout His life, once the religious leaders figured out what He was all about, they wanted to rush Him through the judicial system, all the while violating virtually every legal safeguard the Jews had for malicious prosecution (both in the OT Law and their tradition), to get this guy Jesus dead ASAP.

— Jesus challenged who the Pharisees were, their motives, and they valued personal status above this Man Jesus Christ

— There are people all over, everywhere you look, who know about Jesus but who do not want to get too close to Him, will not trust in Him, because they instinctively know something: that if they do, if they get a little too serious about this Jesus business, they know their life will change. And they are just too comfortable with their lives to allow what some 1st century manuscript says mess it up for them.

— Yet those of us who have come to Jesus Christ by faith know that His blueprint for our life is so much greater than any petty position of authority that I can grab onto on my own. This was the conflict in Jesus' day, and it is the same conflict today.

- "...the sheep did not listen to them" - the religious leaders in Israel never won the hearts of some people, because the sheep of God respond only to their Shepherd

9 I am the door; if anyone enters through Me, **he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture.**

9 I am the door; if anyone enters through Me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture.

9 I'm the gate. If anyone enters through me, he will be saved. He'll come in and go out and find pasture.

9 I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture.

- What is the incentive for someone to enter through the door/Christ versus the incentive that we have from the world?

- "...he will be saved" - saved from what?

— In justification, we're saved from the *penalty* of sin

— In sanctification, we're saved from the *power* of sin in our lives; we're saved from sinful habits and patterns that destroy our quality of life

- In glorification, we're saved from the *presence* of sin, and spending eternity in fellowship with God Himself
- "...will go in and out" - many interpretations of this phrase, but we know what it doesn't mean: we know that "going out" does not mean that we lose our salvation
- The idea likely means that we have freedom in Christ, since we are saved from sin's penalty, the biggest problem in the life of every person ever born has been taken care of by Jesus Christ. We have been delivered from all of sin's penalties, past, present and future.
- There is a liberty that comes by walking with Jesus Christ
- "...find pasture" - one of the main purposes of a shepherd is to feed the flock; a shepherd has three roles in terms of the sheep: guide, graze and guard.
- This is the offense that Jesus, the True Shepherd, has with the false shepherds of Israel: they were not guiding, grazing or guarding the flock. They were fleecing them instead of feeding them (Cf. Ezek 34:2).
- In 21:15-17, where Jesus restored Peter and called him into ministry in v15, Jesus told Peter to "feed My lambs" (new/baby believers); in v16 Jesus told Peter to "shepherd My sheep"; in v17 Jesus told Peter to "feed My sheep" (mature believers)
- This is what God wants His under-shepherds to do for God's people, and this is what God Himself will do for those of His own sheepfold

Jesus' "I Am" Statements

1. "I am the bread of life" (6:35)
 2. "I am the light of the world" (8:12)
 3. **"I am the door" (10:9)**
 4. "I am the good shepherd" (10:11)
 5. "I am the resurrection, and the life" (11:25)
 6. "I am the way, the truth, and the life" (14:6)
 7. "I am the vine, ye are the branches" (15:5)
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- 10 **The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I came so that they would have life, and have *it* abundantly.**
 - 10 The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I came that they may have life, and have *it* abundantly.
 - 10 The thief comes only to steal, slaughter, and destroy. I've come that they may have life, and have it abundantly.
 - 10 The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.
- Now Jesus gets much more specific...

- "The thief" - previously, Jesus referred to "thieves" (plural, v8) referring to the religious leaders in Israel, but here Jesus gets specific (notice the definite article "the" referring to a single thief): Satan himself

— Jesus calls out the power and the motivation behind the "thieves" which is "the thief" himself, Satan. Jesus is no longer talking about the common variety thief (Pharisee), but the puppet master himself who was behind the negative influence of the religious leaders.

— This is the same puppet master who is behind every false shepherd. This isn't a new idea, as Jesus has already revealed this to us (Cf. 8:44).

— Do not underestimate the power or ability of Satan to wreak havoc in your life. He will take whatever is of any value or worth right away from you. He is in the business of stealing, killing and destroying. The moment you trust in Christ is the moment you switch sides from living in friendly territory to living in enemy territory.

— Satan is ruling this world, along with the one-third of angels who followed him out of heaven. This is the situation we find ourselves living in, and it's not changing until the personal return of Jesus Christ, until the kingdoms of this world become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ, and He reigns forever and ever (Rev 11:15). In the meantime, we live on enemy, hostile territory.

— This is why Paul commands us to be "ambassadors" for Jesus Christ. An ambassador is someone who promotes the values of their homeland on foreign soil. As Christians, we are to represent heavenly, kingdom values in an environment that is controlled by another king and kingdom.

- "...so that they would have life" - Jesus says that unlike the thieves and robbers, and "the" thief, my motivations are the exact opposite: Jesus came into the world to restore spiritual life (Cf. 20:30-31).

— Many times when Jesus talks about "life" He is speaking of eternal life (Cf. 3:16, et al), but here He is speaking about a quality of spiritual life that is yours for the believing

— There are many Christians who have eternal life, but they are not experiencing abundant life. The Bible gives us numerous examples (Cf. the Corinthians, 1 Cor; the Galatians, Gal 3:3). They were going to heaven, but they were not experiencing the abundant life God has for them. They had life, but they didn't have it in full measure (abundantly).

— Jesus did not just come into the world to give us eternal life, although that would be enough. He also came into the world to give us abundant life here and now, today.

(B) Metaphor explained (10:7-18)

(b) Good Shepherd (10:11-18)

(i) Claim to being the Good Shepherd (10:11a)

(ii) Reasons for the claim (10:11b-18)

(a) Commitment to the sheep (10:11b-13)

11 "I am the **good shepherd**; the good shepherd lays down His **life** for the **sheep**.

11 "I am the good shepherd; the good shepherd lays down His life for the sheep.

11 "I'm the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.

11 I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep.

- Jesus will now explain what life is like inside Jesus' personal sheepfold...

— He starts off by calling Himself the "good shepherd" then goes on to give us four reasons why He and He alone is uniquely qualified to be called the Good Shepherd:

1. His commitment to the sheep (10:11b-13)
2. His intimacy with the sheep (10:14-15)
3. His desire to reach out to other sheep (10:16)
4. His voluntary death for the sheep (10:17-18)

- "...good shepherd" - this is the only place in Scripture where Jesus is called the "good shepherd"

— In Heb 13:20-21 He is called the "great shepherd"; 1 Peter 5:4 calls Jesus the "chief shepherd"

- The first reason why Jesus is rightfully called the good shepherd is because of His extreme dedication and commitment to the sheep

- "...life" - *psychē*, refers to one's total being

— This shepherd-sheep metaphor was easily understood in first century Israel, but someone laying down their life for a sheep was unheard of because a shepherd's intention was to live in order to continue shepherding the sheep. If the shepherd were to die voluntarily for the sheep, he would no longer be able to shepherd them.

— How different is the ministry and shepherding of Jesus Christ, who came to die specifically for the sheep

— There is no higher commitment from a shepherd to his sheep than to sacrifice his life on behalf of the sheep

- Calvinists, arguing for Limited Atonement, take this verse and argue that the shepherd laid down his life for the sheep, which means that Jesus only laid down His life for the elect

— That is a faulty interpretation because John knew how to use the word *monos* ("alone" Cf. 8:9). So this should not be taken as an exclusive statement (that Jesus died for the sheep alone), but rather a general statement (Cf. 3:16; 1 John 2:2).

— The death of Jesus Christ benefited His sheep, those who believe in Him, but He spilled His blood for the entire world. Every single human being alive today, or who has ever lived, is able to be saved (through belief in Christ).

- "...sheep" - when Jesus calls us sheep, it's not a compliment. Sheep are some of the dumbest animals that God created. They will follow each other off a cliff if you let them. They need constant guidance and shepherding.

Jesus' "I Am" Statements

1. "I am the bread of life" (6:35)
2. "I am the light of the world" (8:12)
3. "I am the door" (10:9)
4. **"I am the good shepherd" (10:11)**
5. "I am the resurrection, and the life" (11:25)
6. "I am the way, the truth, and the life" (14:6)
7. "I am the vine, ye are the branches" (15:5)

12 He who is a **hired hand**, and not a shepherd, who is not the **owner of the sheep**, sees the wolf coming, and leaves the sheep and flees; and the wolf snatches them and scatters *the flock*.

12 He who is a hired hand, and not a shepherd, who is not the owner of the sheep, sees the wolf coming, and leaves the sheep and flees, and the wolf snatches them and scatters *them*.

12 The hired worker, who isn't the shepherd and doesn't own the sheep, sees the wolf coming, deserts the sheep, and runs away. So the wolf snatches them and scatters them,

12 But he that is an hireling, and not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, seeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep, and fleeth: and the wolf catcheth them, and scattereth the sheep.

- In contrast to Jesus' commitment to His sheep, we have the false religious leaders...

- "...hired hand" - not a shepherd whom God ordained; he's not interested in feeding or protecting the flock of God, but rather to fleece the flock of God and taking all he can from God's people

- "...owner of the sheep" - the owner of the sheep is Christ, whom God has entrusted with the sheep that He has given Him (Cf. 6:37)

13 *He flees* because he is a hired hand and does not care about the sheep.

13 *He flees* because he is a hired hand and is not concerned about the sheep.

13 *because he's a hired worker, and the sheep don't matter to him.*

13 *The hireling fleeth, because he is an hireling, and careth not for the sheep.*

- When the wolves come, the hired hand flees because he is only interested in self-preservation and does not care about the sheep. If his position of authority is challenged in any way, he runs away and leaves the sheep unprotected because he is not a true shepherd.

— Jesus here provides a good example for His under-shepherds as well...pastors and other leaders who are charged by God with shepherding the sheep should heed Jesus' words here and use them as an example.

(b) Intimacy with the sheep (10:14-15)

14 **I am the good shepherd, and I know My own, and My own know Me,**

14 I am the good shepherd, and I know My own and My own know Me,

14 I'm the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me,

14 I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine.

- "I am the good shepherd" - repeating His claim and title from v11

- "...I know My own, and My own know Me" - once we enter Jesus' personal sheepfold, by faith alone, what He is saying is that He will know me personally, and that I will know Him personally

— "know" [2x] - *ginōskō*, biblically speaking, this does not mean to acquire data or facts; to "know" something means I have to know a lot of data or facts about what I claim to know

— However the idea of *ginōskō* includes knowledge of facts and data, but it also includes a lot more; it also speaks of personal intimacy. Facts and data are a part of that, but don't encompass the complete idea communicated by *ginōskō*.

— In the NKJV of Gen 4:1, it says Adam *knew* his wife. In the LXX (the Greek translation of the OT), the word *ginōskō* is used, translated as "knew." This "knowing" doesn't mean they sat around and swapped recipes. They "knew" each other on an intimate basis, and we know this is true because the verse goes on to say that Eve "conceived" and bore a son, Cain.

— This example speaks to the deepest level of intimacy you can have with another human being, physically, spiritually and emotionally within marriage. If you're married, your wife has probably told you that she knows you better than you know yourself. And that's probably true.

— This is why Paul uses the husband and wife analogy when he refers to Jesus' relationship to the church (Eph 5); James analogizes falling away from Christ spiritually as adultery (James 4:4)

— Tenney, in his commentary on John's Gospel, says: In John's Gospel, *ginōskō* implies more than cognizance of mere facts; it implies a relationship of trust and intimacy.

— So once you come into Jesus' personal sheepfold by faith alone, He will know you on a level of personal trust and intimacy, and you will know Him on a level of personal trust and intimacy.

15 just as the Father **knows** Me and I know the Father; and I lay down My life for the **sheep.**

15 even as the Father knows Me and I know the Father; and I lay down My life for the sheep.

15 just as the Father knows me and I know the Father. And I lay down my life for the sheep.

15 As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father: and I lay down my life for the sheep.

- Jesus is talking about the intimacy that exists between the Father and the Son

- "...knows" - *ginōskō* (see note on v14)

- Think about the eternally existent relationship between the Father and the Son. What Jesus is saying here is that I can have that same intimate of a relationship with Him that He has with the Father.

- Jesus doesn't want to have that intimate relationship with His sheep as a class or a group, but individually with each one of us, on a daily basis.

- "...I lay down My life for the sheep" - Jesus repeats the first reason why He alone is the "good shepherd" (Cf. v11)

- Calvinism uses this verse as a proof-text to support their doctrine of Limited Atonement, the idea that Christ only died for the elect, not the entire world. They believe only the elect are savable, everyone else cannot be saved because they are not elect and Christ did not die for them.

- Their proof-texts for this unbiblical doctrine are: Matt 20:28; John 10:15; Acts 20:28; Eph 5:25. They use John 12:19 as an example that "the world" does not always mean every single person, but can mean a limited sub-set of people (see notes there).

- However, each of their proof-texts lack exclusivity. This verse does not say that Jesus laid down His life for the sheep "only" or "alone." It just says that He laid down His life for the sheep, which He did. And He also laid down His life for the goats (unbelievers) as well, but that is not the topic or audience here. This verse is part of the Good Shepherd discourse.

- There are an abundance of verses that refute Calvinism's doctrine of Limited Atonement and demonstrate Unlimited Atonement, that Christ died for everyone: John 1:29; 3:16-17; 4:42; 6:51; 12:32,47; 15:18-19; Acts 17:30; 2 Cor 5:19; 1 Tim 2:4,6; **4:10**; Titus 2:11; Heb 2:9; **2 Peter 2:1**; **1 John 2:2**; 4:14; 5:9. Of these, 1 Tim 4:10; 2 Peter 2:1; 1 John 2:2 are explicit in including non-believers in Christ's atonement.

(c) Desire to reach out to other sheep (10:16)

16 And I have **other sheep** that are not of **this fold**; I must bring them also, and they will listen to My voice; and they will become **one flock, with one shepherd**.

16 I have other sheep, which are not of this fold; I must bring them also, and they will hear My voice; and they will become one flock *with* one shepherd.

16 I have other sheep that don't belong to this fold. I must lead these also, and they'll listen to my voice. So there will be one flock and one shepherd.

16 And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd.

- The third reason given why Jesus alone is the "good shepherd" is that He is not satisfied with the sheep He has, but He wants to reach out to others who are wandering through life in a disillusioned state, and need His shepherding influence as well.
- What Jesus has done up to this point in His ministry is draw sheep to believe in Him from the sheepfold of Israel. All of His followers (sheep) at this point are Jews; no Gentiles at this point had come to believe in Him.
- "...other sheep" - Gentiles, outside the sheepfold of Israel, who would eventually come to believe in Jesus Christ
 - He is talking about a time, not far off, where He would not only reach out to the sheepfold of Israel to draw out sheep, but to the entire planet, from all ethnic backgrounds, to augment or come alongside the Jewish believers already in His fold.
 - Up until Acts 10 when Cornelius was saved, all converts up to that point were Jewish. Cornelius was the first Gentile who was saved. And this rocked the Jewish world in such a way that they had to have a council meeting to ascertain whether this was from God or not.
 - Just what happened to the blind man from birth, that same process is going to happen throughout the Gentile world, outside the borders of Israel
 - This verse is one of only a few hints at a coming Church Age by the gospel writers
- "...this fold" - Israel
- "...one flock, *with* one shepherd" - perfectly describes the church (Cf. Eph 2:11-22; 3:6)

(d) Voluntary death for the sheep (10:17-18)

17 For this reason the Father loves Me, because I lay down My life so that I may take it back.

17 For this reason the Father loves Me, because I lay down My life so that I may take it again.

17 This is why the Father loves me, because I lay down my life in order to take it back again.

17 Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again.

- The final reason why Jesus alone is qualified for the title of "good shepherd": He voluntarily laid down His life for the sheep
- "For this reason" - does not mean that the Father's love for the Son is conditional upon the Son laying down His life or taking it back
 - God loves all people unconditionally, but there is also a "special love" that comes from God upon the person who is obedient to the things of God. God loves all people, but those who obey Him, who make progress in their progressive sanctification, God gives them a special type of love/favor. We might also call this special love "fellowship."
 - The Father had this "special love" for the Son, over and above the love that He has for all people because the Son was committed to fulfilling the will of the Father, even to the point

of death

- "...I lay down My life" - the animals during the OT sacrifices were not asked if they wanted to die for the sins of the people, they were voluntold to do so. They had no say in the matter, they were selected, brought in, and slaughtered.

— Jesus, our final once-and-for-all sacrifice for sin, volunteered to lay down His life for the sheep. He had the opportunity to pass the buck, but He decided not to

- "...so that I may take it back" - it's one thing to die (the mortality rate is still 100%), but it's something completely different to come into the world predicting your own death and also your bodily resurrection from the dead, then go on to fulfill your promise

— This is why we worship this Man Jesus Christ. No other figure in history has done anything like this. Jesus is the unique God-Man. This is what makes Jesus Christ different. The empty tomb is a uniqueness of Jesus Christ that you will find of no one else in human history. And that fact that He predicted it then pulled it off validates every word He ever spoke.

18 No one has taken it away from Me, but I lay it down on My own. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it back. This commandment I received from My Father."

18 No one has taken it away from Me, but I lay it down on My own initiative. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again. This commandment I received from My Father."

18 No one is taking it from me; I lay it down of my own free will. I have the authority to lay it down, and I have the authority to take it back again. This is what my Father has commanded me."

18 No man taketh 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 commandment have I received of my Father.

- We should not get the idea that Jesus Christ was overpowered, overwhelmed, or taken aback by the pursuits and motivations of His enemies

— He died voluntarily, on His time table, because He had the authority from the Father to die, and the authority of the Father to rise again

- There is a teaching out there that argues that Jesus emptied Himself of His attributes and His ability to perform miracles at His Incarnation. If you ask them how Jesus performed His miracles, they will tell you that He performed His miracles under the power of the Holy Spirit or under the direction and authority of the Father, because He had no independent miracle-working capacity because of His Incarnation.

— That is an interesting concept, but it is flatly contradicted by this verse. It is true to say that Jesus did perform some miracles under the power of the Holy Spirit or under the power of the Father. But the Bible never says that in His Incarnation, Jesus emptied Himself of His attributes or His miracle-working powers.

— What then did Jesus empty Himself of? Not his power, not His attributes, not His deity, not His ability to perform miracles...but He emptied Himself of the independent exercise of those things. He had these things during His Incarnation, but He voluntarily submitted those things to God the Father.

— There are examples in John's Gospel of Jesus exercising His miracle power and attributes: when He told Nathaniel that He saw him under the fig tree (Cf. 1:48). It doesn't say that the Holy Spirit empowered Jesus to see Nathaniel, and it doesn't say the Father empowered Jesus to see Nathaniel. Jesus just saw him through the use of His attribute of omniscience. The attribute was His, but it was exercised under the *direction* of God the Father. Jesus did not independently exercise that attribute beyond the Father's discretion.

— When Satan tempted Jesus in the wilderness, the temptation was aimed directly at Christ, to use His miracle-working power to do something independent of the Father, outside of the Father's direction or discretion. During Jesus' temptation, the devil himself recognized that Jesus could perform a miracle (Cf. Luke 4:3), but he also recognized that Jesus in His humiliation (*kenosis*) surrendered the independent exercise of that attribute, so Satan tried to break that bond and drive a wedge between the Father and the Son.

(19) Events Surrounding the Feast of Dedication (Hanukkah) (10:19-42)

(A) Mixed Reaction (10:19-21)

19 Dissension occurred again among the Jews because of these words.

19 A division occurred again among the Jews because of these words.

19 Once again there was a division among the Jews because of what Jesus had been saying.

19 There was a division therefore again among the Jews for these sayings.

- "Dissension" - whenever Jesus spoke, it caused a division or schism in His hearers: some believed, but most disregarded what He said and did not believe (7:43; 9:16; Cf. Matt 10:34-36)

20 Many of them were saying, "He has a demon and is insane. Why do you listen to Him?"

20 Many of them were saying, "He has a demon and is insane. Why do you listen to Him?"

20 Many of them were saying, "He has a demon and is insane. Why bother listening to him?"

20 And many of them said, He hath a devil, and is mad; why hear ye him?

- Many times when we talk about Jesus, we will receive a visceral reaction from those who hear us, sometimes even from those within our own family

— We often view this reaction that we said or did something wrong, but instead it is often a sign that we have done something right

— Truth will always create barriers or divisions between people

— Jesus here is called insane and demon possessed

21 Others were saying, "These are not the words of one who is demon-possessed. A demon cannot open the eyes of those who are blind, can it?"

21 Others were saying, "These are not the sayings of one demon-possessed. A demon cannot open the eyes of the blind, can he?"

21 Others were saying, "These are not the words of a man who is demon-possessed. A demon cannot open the eyes of the blind, can it?"

21 Others said, These are not the words of him that hath a devil. Can a devil open the eyes of the blind?

- Others (those who may believe) hear Jesus speak and reason that someone who speaks such lucid and wise words is clearly not demon possessed

- The question asked here is obvious: Jesus just restored sight to a man who never saw before, and a demon cannot do that, therefore Jesus cannot be demon possessed

— Plus, if he was demon possessed, why is He going around going so much good for people?

- These Jews had a real dilemma: Jesus was going around doing incredible miracles, which could not be explained away, so some of them attributed Jesus' miracles to Satan. But that was not a real possibility because Satan's goal is evil but the miracles that Jesus did were beneficial and good for people.

— The Pharisees and religious leaders finally declared that Jesus' miracles were from Satan (Matt 12:24ff), and Jesus gives them a series of reasons why that could not be true.

(B) Murder Attempted (10:22-39)

(a) First Attempt (10:22-31)

This isn't the first attempt to kill Jesus outlined in John's Gospel, just the first one (of two attempts) in this chapter (Cf. 8:59). But the previous attempt(s) as well as the two attempts in this chapter, are unsuccessful because of what Jesus said in v17-18: He lays down His life on His own, voluntarily, and no one takes His life from Him.

(i) Worship of Jesus (10:22-24)

22 At that time the **Feast of the Dedication** took place in Jerusalem;

22 At that time the Feast of the Dedication took place at Jerusalem;

22 Now Hanukkah was taking place in Jerusalem. It was winter,

22 And it was at Jerusalem the feast of the dedication, and it was winter.

- "...Feast of the Dedication" - Hanukkah (Dan 8:9-14,23-25), celebrating the rededication of the Jewish temple in Jerusalem in 165 BC, after it was desecrated by Antiochus Epiphanes

- Some people do not believe that the two non-Levitical feasts celebrated in Judaism (Purim and Hanukkah) are not as important as the feasts described and ordained by God in Leviticus

— Somehow that doesn't appear to be true because Jesus is in Jerusalem to celebrate this non-Levitical feast, so evidently He found its celebration to be important

23 it was winter, and Jesus was walking in the temple *area*, in the portico of Solomon.

23 it was winter, and Jesus was walking in the temple in the portico of Solomon.

23 and Jesus was walking around in the Temple inside the open porch of Solomon.

23 And Jesus walked in the temple in Solomon's porch.

24 The Jews then surrounded Him and *began* saying to Him, "How long will You keep us in suspense? If You are the Christ, tell us plainly."

24 The Jews then gathered around Him, and were saying to Him, "How long will You keep us in suspense? If You are the Christ, tell us plainly."

24 So the Jewish leaders surrounded him and quizzed him, "How long are you going to keep us in suspense? If you're the Messiah, tell us so plainly."

24 Then came the Jews round about him, and said unto him, How long dost thou make us to doubt? If thou be the Christ, tell us plainly.

- To the Jewish mind, the Messiah (Christ) is the One who would arrive on the scene and redeem Israel, not spiritually but physically/politically, from her oppressors, which at that time was Rome

— To them, the Messiah was a political ruler exclusively, and they ignored the spiritual reality of sin

— They, including Jesus, were all in Jerusalem celebrating the liberation of the Jewish temple in 165 BC. But about 100 years after that liberation they're celebrating, in 63 BC, Israel went under Roman domination and had been up until Jesus' time, and the Jews didn't like it.

— They are wanting Jesus to stand up and be that political Messiah that they believe the OT predicted and overthrow Rome just like the Maccabees overthrew Antiochus Epiphanes

— Their expectations of the Messiah were completely political, with no thought of their own spiritual plight. Jesus had the same problem with these folks in 6:15,26, after feeding the 5000. After seeing that miracle, the crowds began to follow them, not to receive spiritual nourishment, but because they believed He could be their political savior and overthrow the shackles of Rome and set them free.

— Jesus removed Himself from that situation because political freedom and liberation was not on His agenda during His first coming. He came with a spiritual agenda, because you can't have political peace until you have spiritual peace with God. There is a spiritual and

moral transformation that must take place in the heart before kingdom realities can come to pass.

(ii) Words of Jesus (10:25-30)

(a) You do not believe (10:25)

25 Jesus answered them, **"I told you, and you do not believe; the works that I do in My Father's name, these testify of Me.**

25 Jesus answered them, **"I told you, and you do not believe; the works that I do in My Father's name, these testify of Me.**

25 Jesus answered them, **"I have told you, but you don't believe it. The actions that I do in my Father's name testify on my behalf,**

25 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.

- "...I told you" - Jesus says I've made it clear to you who I am, but you do not listen and you do not believe

— This question isn't new. You keep asking questions and I keep answering them, yet the needle doesn't move on your belief.

- "...you do not believe" - belief is always the sole condition held out in John's Gospel to be saved and have a relationship with the God who made you

- "...the works that I do in My Father's name, these testify of Me" - this is the purpose of John's Gospel (Cf. 20:30-31)

— Jesus performed sign after sign, miracle after miracle, documented throughout John's Gospel, but they still did not want to believe

— They wanted the kingdom without the moral requirements of the King; they wanted to get the cart before the horse

(b) You are not my sheep (10:26)

26 **But you do not believe, because you are not of My sheep.**

26 **But you do not believe because you are not of My sheep.**

26 **but you don't believe, because you don't belong to my sheep.**

26 **But ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep, as I said unto you.**

- The reason they didn't believe in Him is because they were not a part of His sheepfold; they had no spiritual relationship with Him by faith

From the human standpoint, we become His sheep by believing; but from the divine standpoint, we believe because we are His sheep...In the Bible, divine election and human responsibility are perfectly balanced; and what God has joined together, we must not put asunder. — Warren Wiersbe

(c) Characteristics of the sheep (10:27-29)

27 My sheep **listen to My voice**, and I know them, and **they follow Me**;

27 My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me;

27 My sheep hear my voice. I know them, and they follow me.

27 My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me:

- For those who are in My sheepfold, who do believe, here are some of their characteristics:

- "...listen to My voice"- when His sheep are among other sheep and Jesus calls, His sheep hear and know His voice

- "...I know them" - *ginōskō*, a personal, intimate relationship; see notes on v14

- "...they follow Me" - when His sheep hear His voice, they follow Him

28 and I **give them eternal life**, and they will **never** perish; and **no one** will snatch them out of My hand.

28 and I give eternal life to them, and they will never perish; and no one will snatch them out of My hand.

28 I give them eternal life, they'll never be lost, and no one will snatch them out of my hand.

28 And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand.

- Verses 28-29 are the strongest verses in the Bible promoting the idea of eternal security (Cf. Rom 8:38-39)...

- "...I give them eternal life" - salvation is a work of God from beginning to end. We receive this work of God by fulfilling a single condition: belief/trust in Him.

— It is God who elected us, it is God who called us, it is God who set up the circumstances by which we come to saving faith, and then after coming to Him in faith, it is God who gives us the resources to live for Him in this fallen world. Then after we die, it is God who takes us into glory.

— So if salvation is a work of God from beginning to end, what can I do to deactivate the process, to overpower God's omnipotence and remove myself from what is solely His work in salvation? Nothing, because my salvation has nothing to do with me.

— Some Christians doubt their salvation because they are focused on themselves...I

watched a movie I shouldn't have watched, I told a joke I shouldn't have told, whatever you did...when I'm focused on my self and my performance, I will doubt my salvation. But salvation is not of me, it's of God, so instead of focusing on myself I should focus on God and His promises, what He says about me, not what I think about myself.

— When we focus on what God has done instead of what we have done, since salvation is a work of God from beginning to end, we can be assured of our salvation because it has nothing to do with us

— "eternal" - *aiōnios*, the same Greek word used to describe the eternality of God Himself. The eternal life that Jesus gives us at the point of belief (Cf. 5:24) is just as eternal as God Himself.

— If I could somehow lose my salvation, then this eternal life that Jesus speaks about is not eternal because I've lost it

- "...never" - *ou mē*, a double negation, the strongest negation in the Greek language. What Jesus is saying is that it is an emphatic impossibility that someone who has eternal life could ever lose it and perish.

— Dan Wallace, a prominent Greek grammarian, says: "This is the strongest way to negate something in Greek. It rules out even the idea as being a possibility. It's the most decisive way of negating something in the future."

— It's akin to saying that those who have been given eternal life at some point can never, ever, ever, never perish. Spanish translation: *No way José!*

— There are three untranslated Greek words in this verse: *eis ton aionia*, meaning "forever." So as if Jesus could clarify it any further, He says that to those whom He has given eternal life, they can never, ever, ever perish forever, under any circumstance.

— Other passages that provide the same iron-clad promise of eternal salvation for those who believe are: Rom 8:31-39; 1 Peter 1:4-5

- "...no one" - no one means nobody, not even Satan! And that includes yourself...you cannot remove yourself from Jesus' grasp (Cf. 2 Tim 2:13).

29 My Father, who has **given *them* to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch *them* out of the Father's hand.**

29 My Father, who has given *them* to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch *them* out of the Father's hand.

29 What my Father has given me is more important than anything, and no one can snatch it from the Father's hand.

29 My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand.

- "...given *them* to Me" - a reference back to 6:37; you are in the sheepfold of Jesus Christ because the Father has given the Son a gift

— So v27 says we have to believe, but v29 says that God gave us as a gift to the Son. So which is it? Both.

— We have to believe (the human side), but God also gives us to the Son (the heavenly side). So do we choose God or does He choose us? Yes.

— Somehow God made a pre-temporal move toward us so that in His providence, then we're exposed to the gospel at some point during our life and through the persuasion/conviction of the Holy Spirit, we believe it. That is man's part. On God's side, the Father has given everyone who would believe to the Son.

— Warren Wiersbe said of this verse: "From the human standpoint, we become sheep by believing, but from the divine viewpoint, we believe because we are His sheep."

— Throughout the Bible, divine election and human responsibility are perfectly balanced, but the topic still raises questions and tension in the minds of many believers. As we grow in our faith and mature spiritually, we learn to live with this tension and instead of questioning or arguing, we take what the Bible says at face value, even when it makes no logical sense to us.

— It is supreme arrogance for us to think that with our finite mind, bound by time and space, that we can harmonize everything that God has told us. How arrogant and ignorant to think that we can understand the majesty of an omniscient God who revealed this concept.

— What God wants us to do is come to a realization of what He has revealed in Scripture. If we do that but can't understand it, leave it alone because it can't be understood this side of heaven. We need to concentrate on doing our side, believing, and evangelizing those we come across to believe, and let God worry about His side and the things He did in pre-temporal history.

— Let God be God and do God-sized tasks, and I focus on the human tasks that He gave me to do. Almost any time we become stressed and burdened, it's because we've taken a God-sized task and placed it on our own shoulders.

- "...greater than all" - is the Father greater than the Son? The Father and Son are equal in terms of essence but different in terms of role. The Son has a lesser *role* than the Father. This doesn't refer to value or worth because in those things, the Father and Son are equal.

— What Jesus is describing here is Functional Subordination. He is not saying that the Father is greater than the Son, He's saying that the Father has a *higher role*.

— The greatest power in the universe is the Father, greater than the Son and the Holy Spirit, yet all three are equal in essence and power, the difference is in their roles

— The Father has given every sheep over to the Son. If the greatest Being is the one who gives the sheep to the Son, how in the world could you lose your salvation because the entire salvation process was started by the greatest Being in the universe.

- "...no one is able to snatch *them* out of the Father's hand" - v28 says that believers with eternal life are safe in the hand of the Son, then v29 goes on to say that believers are safe in the hand of the Father

— This is called the "double grip of grace." If we are safe in the Son's hand (which is enough to feel eternally secure), then on top of the Son's hand is the Father's hand, both

the Father and Son would have to drop the ball in order for a believer to lose their salvation.

What happens if a believer stops believing, turns their back on Christ, and begins to live in sin? — see 2 Tim 2:13.

The "hand of Christ" is beneath us, and the "hand" of the Father is above us. Thus, we are secured between the clasped hands of Omnipotence. — AW Pink

(d) Jesus and the Father are One (10:30)

30 I and the Father are one."

30 I and the Father are one."

30 I and the Father are one."

30 I and [the] Father are one.

- If the Father is greater than the Son (10:29), then how could the Father and Son be one?

— We have to understand that the distinction between the Father and Son is only functional, they serve in different roles. This is the *only* difference between them. But in essence, they are equal.

— When the Son submits to the Father, He does not relinquish one iota of deity when doing so

— It's the same relationship between husband and wife: both husband and wife were created in the image of God; both husband and wife are joint heirs of salvation; both husband and wife were appointed by God as co-rulers of creation.

— But within that marriage, God calls the husband to play a different *role* than the wife. The husband is the head of the marriage and the wife is to submit to the husband. When the wife submits to her husband, she does not relinquish one iota of her value or worth, or her creation in God's image, of being a joint heir in salvation, or her appointment by God to be a co-ruler of creation.

— It's a distinction not in essence, value, or worth, but rather a functional difference based on her role

— Until you understand functional subordination, verses like this will always be puzzling to you. In v29 Jesus is talking about functional subordination; in v30 Jesus is talking about essence.

Just like the idea of the Trinity, the idea of divine election is incomprehensible by mankind's human mind. But in the end, do you want to worship a God that you can wrap your mind around? Do you want to worship a God that you can understand completely? The fact that there are these profound mysteries in the Bible should cause us to rejoice, not question. A God small enough for our mind would not be big enough for our need.

(iii) Wickedness of the Jews (10:31)

31 The Jews picked up stones again to stone Him.

31 The Jews picked up stones again to stone Him.

31 Again the Jewish leaders picked up stones to stone him to death.

31 Then the Jews took up stones again to stone him.

- The Jews would not receive His message because Jesus would not address the need to change their political reality. Jesus kept talking about a spiritual reality that must precede a political reality, but the Jews wanted nothing to do with that.

— The Pharisees and religious leaders were so buried in works righteousness that they could not receive Christ's offer of grace through faith

— In addition, Jesus' claim of equality with the Father in v30 violated Lev 24:16 in the minds of the Jews. It was blasphemy in their eyes, which came with the penalty of death by stoning.

(b) Second Attempt (10:32-39)

(i) Christ's words (10:32-38)

(a) Did not believe the Scriptures (10:32-36)

32 Jesus replied to them, "I showed you many good works from the Father; for which of them are you stoning Me?"

32 Jesus answered them, "I showed you many good works from the Father; for which of them are you stoning Me?"

32 Jesus replied to them, "I've shown you many good actions from my Father. For which of them are you going to stone me?"

32 Jesus answered them, Many good works have I shewed you from my Father; for which of those works do ye stone me?

- Jesus begins to reveal the heart of His accusers...

- When Jesus performed miracles, He always did so in solidarity with the Father, under the Father's permission

— Jesus' attributes and ability to perform miracles were always present with Him, but He submitted those attributes to the will of the Father. During His Incarnation, Jesus submitted the independent exercise of His attributes to the will of the Father.

— Thus, when Jesus performed a sign or miracle, He did so with the blessing of the Father. The signs that Jesus performed always pointed to His identity as the Son of God and Messiah (Cf. 20:30-31).

33 The Jews answered Him, "We are not stoning You for a good work, but for blasphemy; and because You, being a man, make Yourself *out to be* God."

33 The Jews answered Him, "For a good work we do not stone You, but for blasphemy; and because You, being a man, make Yourself out *to be* God."

33 The Jewish leaders answered him, "We are not going to stone you for a good action, but for blasphemy, because you, a mere man, are making yourself God!"

33 The 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.

- It wasn't Jesus' signs and miracles that upset the Pharisees, but it was His "blasphemous" words (10:30). This is why they wanted to kill Him.

— The reason they thought this way is because they had already rejected the notion that Jesus was the Messiah. Had they accepted this reality, the statement Jesus made in v30 wouldn't have offended them.

— But they rejected the numerous claims of Christ to be deity (Cf. 8:58-59; 10:30-31; Mark 14:61-64), so to them Jesus was just a normal man who claimed to be God

34 Jesus answered them, "**Has it not been written in your Law: 'I SAID, YOU ARE GODS'?**"

34 Jesus answered them, "**Has it not been written in your Law, 'I said, you are gods'?**"

34 Jesus replied to them, "**Is it not written in your Law, 'I said, "You are gods"?"**"

34 Jesus answered them, **Is it not written in your law, I said, Ye are gods?**

- "...Law" - *nomos*, typically refers to the *Torah* (the Hebrew word for Law), the first five books of the OT (Gen, Ex, Lev, Num, Deut). However here, Jesus uses it to refer to Hebrew Bible (the entire OT) because His quote comes from Ps 82:6.

- "...YOU ARE GODS" - one of the most controversial verses in the entire Bible; Jesus appears to be calling people "gods"

- There is a movement in Christianity today called the "word of faith" movement or the "positive confession" movement. Sometimes it is called the "prosperity gospel." They teach the doctrine of the "little gods" based on this verse.

— What the "little gods" doctrine teaches is that we are equal with God, and that we are entitled to two things in this life: health and wealth. We are able to speak these things into reality in our life, just like God spoke everything into existence in Gen 1, creating something out of nothing (*exnihilo*).

— So if you want a bigger house, a nicer car, or more money in your bank account, you can simply speak these things into reality in your life

— But if you speak these things into your life and they don't come into existence, then you either do not have enough faith or you have not learned to access the laws of naming and claiming through this speaking ability.

Four Problems with the "little gods" Doctrine

1. The Bible never teaches that we are "little gods"

- The Bible maintains a distinction between the Creator and the created throughout the Bible (Cf. Is 45:5)
 - What the Bible teaches is that we are image-bearers of God; we are unique among God's created order by the fact that we bear His image (share in some of His attributes, i.e. God is emotional, so are we; God is rational, man has the ability to be rational; God rules by dominion, so do we [Gen 1:26-28], etc.).
 - We share in God's "communicable" attributes; God has other attributes that are "incommunicable" which are things that are unique to God alone. If God did not have incommunicable attributes, He wouldn't be God. These are things like His omniscience, omnipotence, and omnipresence.
 - The doctrine of "little gods" is the same thing that got Adam and Eve into trouble in the first place (Cf. Gen 3:5). Satan told Eve that she would be "like God" if she ate of the forbidden fruit. It's also the same lie that deceived Satan (Cf. Is 14:14).
2. The Bible never teaches that we can speak our own reality
- Our tongue is very powerful (Cf. James 3), but it does not have the ability to create *ex nihilo*, to create something out of nothing. This power is an incommunicable attribute of God.
 - So what do we do when we're sick or poor? What we don't do is put ourselves in the position of God and command these things out of our life. Instead, we humbly submit ourselves and our request in prayer to the will of the Creator (Cf. James 4:15; 1 John 5:14).
 - What the "little gods" doctrine does is put man into the position of God, and makes God some sort of "cosmic bellhop" who bends to the will of man, rather than man submitting to the will of God.
3. Not every believer is guaranteed wealth
- God gives some believers wealth (i.e. Abraham, David); Paul gave instructions to the wealthy believer in 1 Tim 6:17-19.
 - However, God does not bless every believer with wealth. And the "little gods" doctrine really falls apart when you leave the United States. Go to a 2nd or 3rd world country, and you will be hard-pressed to find a wealthy believer. Instead, you will find devout Christians living in poverty-stricken conditions. Are these believers somehow less spiritual than we are?
 - One of the worst things that can happen to you in life is that you become rich. The Bible warns us over and over again about the deceitfulness of money. The best we can ask for in this life is to be right in the middle (Cf. Prov 30:8-9; Rev 3:17).

- There is not a single passage of Scripture that indicates that believers this side of heaven are entitled to or guaranteed wealth.

4. Not every believer is guaranteed health

- There are many examples of sick believers in the Bible, including those who were healed or never healed.
- If every believer was entitled to perfect health, why are there so many commands in Scripture to pray for those who are sick, to seek out elders to pray for healing, etc.?
- Does God heal people today? Yes, absolutely. But is every believer guaranteed healing if they are sick? No. The only time in history where believers are guaranteed healing is in the Eternal State (Rev 21:4).
 - In 2 Tim 4:20, at the end of his life, Paul left Trophimus sick in Miletus. Even Paul, who once raised someone from the dead and healed many people, could not heal Trophimus.
 - Paul endured frequent illnesses (Gal 4:13), and he also endured a "thorn in the flesh" (2 Cor 12:7-10) for which he prayed constantly for the Lord to take it away, but God never did.
- If you tell a Christian that the reason why they are sick is because they do not have enough faith, you're ascribing to them double jeopardy: they already have to endure their sickness/disease and the handicaps in life that come from it, which is difficult enough, but then you have someone advocating the "little gods" health and wealth doctrine, telling them that they are sick because they don't have enough faith or because there is some sin in their life. All that does is add another burden upon them. They are already dealing with their sickness, which is hard enough, but then some Christian comes along teaching an abhorrent, unbiblical doctrine, and puts another unnecessary burden upon them.

35 If he called them gods, to whom the word of God came **(and the Scripture cannot be nullified),**

35 If he called them gods, to whom the word of God came (and the Scripture cannot be broken),

35 If he called those to whom a message from God came 'gods' (and the Scripture cannot be disregarded),

35 If he called them gods, unto whom the word of God came, and the scripture cannot be broken;

- Jesus is saying that the OT sometimes uses the word *elohim* (god) in reference to men who are representatives of God

— The Lord used these men in such a powerful way that to their human counterparts, they seemed like "gods"

— A perfect example is what God said to Moses in Ex 7:1; 8:19...God would use Moses in such a mighty way that Moses would appear to be a "god" to Pharaoh. It would appear to Pharaoh that Moses was a "god" because of how God used him.

— The word *elohim* ("god") was applied to Moses in both instances because God used Moses so mightily that he appeared to be God. The power and authority behind Moses in both instances was not himself, it was God. Moses was just God's acting representative.

- "... (and the Scripture cannot be nullified)" - a tremendous statement on the infallibility of the Bible

— "the Scripture" - referring to Ps 82:6

36 are you saying of Him whom the Father **sanctified** and sent into the world, 'You are blaspheming,' because I said, 'I am the Son of God'?

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'?

36 how can you say to the one whom the Father has consecrated and sent into the world, 'You're blaspheming,' because I said, 'I'm the Son of God'?

36 Say ye of him, whom the Father hath sanctified, and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest; because I said, I am the Son of God?

- Jesus argues from the lesser to the greater...He is saying that if what I said in v35 is correct, you (Pharisees) should have no problem that I call Myself the "Son of God." Jesus calls them out for not knowing their OT.

— If the OT uses the term *elohim* ("gods") of men who were God's representatives, and if the OT is infallible, inerrant, and cannot be nullified, then the Jews should not be accusing Jesus of blasphemy or opposing Him because He called Himself the "Son of God"

— Jesus is making the point that *elohim* is a term that is justifiably assignable to a man who is God's representative, because it was used that exact same way in the OT

— The lesser to greater argument is...if the title of "god" can be used of Moses, God's representative, why can't it be used of Me, since, unlike Moses, I am the unique Member of the Godhead, set apart and sent into the world

— Jesus' words here are a reaction to their desire to kill Him because He, as a mere man in their eyes, claimed to be God

— For them to accept the title given to Moses but not accept the title given to Jesus meant that they do not understand the very same Scriptures that they claim to advocate and defend

- "...sanctified" - *hagiazō*, Jesus was set apart by the Father for a unique mission. This mission was ordained by God the Father for God the Son before the foundation of the world

(1 Peter 1:20).

(b) Did not believe His miracles (10:37-38)

37 If I do not do the works of My Father, do not believe Me;

37 If I do not do the works of My Father, do not believe Me;

37 If I'm not doing my Father's actions, don't believe me.

37 If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not.

- Jesus tells them, If I can't back up My claim that I and the Father are one (10:30), then don't believe Me

— If My miracles do not speak for themselves that I am from the Father, go ahead and don't believe Me

— Jesus is telling them that His claims are backed up by His works/miracles. He's not just making arbitrary claims to deity, He is backing them up with works that these Pharisees knew only God could do.

38 but if I do *them*, even though you do not believe Me, believe the works, so that you may know and understand that the Father is in Me, and I in the Father."

38 but if I do them, though you do not believe Me, believe the works, so that you may know and understand that the Father is in Me, and I in the Father."

38 But if I'm doing them, even though you don't believe me, believe the actions, so that you may know and understand that the Father is in me and I am in the Father."

38 But 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.

- But since I am backing up My claim by My signs and wonders, you should believe Me

Jesus tells them that they are so angry that He claimed equality with God the Father, but there are two things they are wrong about:

1. They didn't even understand their own Bible (OT)
2. They rejected the evidence (signs/wonders) which are happening right in front of you, which authenticate that My claims are true.

(ii) Their wickedness (10:39)

39 Therefore they were seeking again to arrest Him, and He eluded their grasp.

39 Therefore they were seeking again to seize Him, and He eluded their grasp.

39 Again they tried to seize him, but he slipped away from them.

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

- They have already rejected the fact that Jesus was their promised Messiah, so what are they left with? A mere man who claims to be God, which was a violation of Lev 24:16.

- Jesus performs yet another "Houdini" act and eludes their capture yet again, because no one told Jesus when and how He was going to die. He orchestrated His own death and voluntarily gave His life for us, without any human intervention as to the timing (Cf. v18).

(C) Meeting with Jesus (10:40-42)

40 And He went away again beyond the Jordan to the place where John was first baptizing, and He stayed there.

40 And He went away again beyond the Jordan to the place where John was first baptizing, and He was staying there.

40 Then he went away again across the Jordan to the place where John had been baptizing at first, and he remained there.

40 And went away again beyond Jordan into the place where John at first baptized; and there he abode.

- Jesus was in Jerusalem celebrating the Feast of Dedication (Cf. v22), but now moves to the location where John the Baptist baptized Him, east of the Jordan River

41 Many came to Him and were saying, "While John performed no sign, yet **everything John said about this man** was true."

41 Many came to Him and were saying, "While John performed no sign, yet everything John said about this man was true."

41 Many people came to him and kept saying, "John never performed a sign, but everything that John said about this man is true!"

41 And many resorted unto him, and said, John did no miracle: but all things that John spake of this man were true.

- "...everything John said about this man" - early in John's Gospel, John the Baptist had a ministry that would testify to the reality of Jesus Christ (Cf. 1:6-8); when Jesus presented Himself to John the Baptist in the Jordan River to be baptized, John testified the next day that Jesus was "the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world" (Cf. 1:29).

— This group beyond the Jordan remembered what John the Baptist said about Jesus, and they realized that everything that John had said about Jesus was true

42 And many believed in Him there.

42 Many believed in Him there.

42 And many believed in Jesus there.

42 And many believed on him there.

- Another reference to the parallel lines of belief and unbelief that John develops throughout His gospel...the majority follow the Pharisees and religious leaders in their

disdain and unbelief in Christ, but there is a small remnant that continues to grow during Jesus' ministry, which came to belief in Him

— John carefully develops these parallel lines of belief and unbelief to communicate to his readers that there is no neutrality when it comes to Jesus: there is either belief or unbelief. Every person must make a choice on which side of the ledger they stand.

— If you are not in the camp of belief, you are in the camp of unbelief. God has no grandchildren. Every human being must decide what they are going to do with this Man, Jesus Christ.

— John rehearses these parallel lines to ask us what side of the ledger are you on...the side of belief and trust, or the side of unbelief?