

THE GREAT SHEPHERD'S CLAIMS

JOHN 10:22–42

Introduction

Jesus Christ is the *Great Shepherd* – great because of who He is. Note the phenomenal claims He made.

- I. Jesus was in Jerusalem at the Feast of Dedication (vv. 22-24).
- II. Claim 1: He is the Messiah (vv. 25-29).
- III. Claim 2: He is one with God, that is, He is God Himself (vv. 30-33).
- IV. Claim 3: He is the Son of God (vv. 34-36).
- V. Claim 4: God is in Him and He is in God – absolutely (vv. 37-39).
- VI. Conclusion: Jesus retired (vv. 40-42).

I. *John 10:22–24 Jesus Christ at the Feast of Dedication*

Jesus was in Jerusalem at the Feast of Dedication. (See *Feast of Dedication*, Jn. 10:22.) He was walking in Solomon's colonnade. The temple had two arcades surrounding the Court of the Gentiles. They were just as films picture the arcades of the Greek and Roman eras: stately, magnificent and awe-inspiring. There was an east arcade and a south arcade. The east arcade was known as Solomon's porch. Several Biblical events took place here (Jn. 10:23; Acts 3:11; 5:12). Note how the Jews surrounded and encircled Him, for they were determined to get a straight answer: "If you are the Christ, tell us plainly." Is Jesus the Messiah or not?

JOHN 10: 22 FEAST OF DEDICATION

This feast was founded to celebrate the freedom of Israel from Syria in 164 BC. What had happened was terrible. Antiochus Epiphanes, the King of Syria from 175 to 164 BC, loved Greek society and wanted to turn his part of the world into a model Greek society. William Barclay points out that he ran into trouble when he tried to make the Jews into full-fledged Greeks both in custom and religion. At first he tried peacefully, and some of the Jews adopted Greek ideas; but as history has shown, most Jews were not going to surrender their beliefs. In order to be successful, Antiochus knew that he had to destroy Jewish religion. He attacked Jerusalem, slaughtering 80,000 Jews by the most horrible means imaginable and enslaving another 80,000. He then desecrated the Jewish temple by...

- turning the great altar of the burnt offering into an altar to the Greek god, Zeus.
- sacrificing swine flesh upon the altar.
- setting up a trade of prostitution in the temple chambers.

Such abhorrent acts caused some Jews to go underground and to take up the struggle against Antiochus. Judas Maccabaeus and his brothers soon came to the forefront as the leaders of the revolt against Syria. In 165 BC they were successful, and one of their first acts was to cleanse, restore, and rededicate the temple. It was for the purpose of celebrating the rededication of the temple to the worship of God that the *Feast of Dedication* was founded.

The feast has also been called the Festival of Lights. Its Jewish name is Hanukkah, and it is still celebrated today. The Festival lasted eight days and was characterized by the burning of lights. Lights were burned in every Jewish home throughout the city and countryside and in every corner of the temple. Every place throughout the land was lit up to celebrate the great day of deliverance. The lights symbolized the light of freedom that had been newly won for the nation. Note: the feast took place in the winter; its festivities were similar to the feast of tabernacles (2 Macc. 1:9; 10:6). This is the only time the feast is mentioned in the gospels (William Barclay. *The Gospel of John*, Vol. 2. "The Daily Study Bible." Philadelphia, PA: The Westminster Press, 1956, p. 81f.) □

II. *John 10:25–29 Jesus Claims to be the Messiah*

The first claim of Jesus was that He is the Messiah. There is a contrast in these verses (vv. 24-29), a contrast between the religionists and the Lord's sheep, between not believing and believing.

1. The religionists did not believe (vv. 25-26).
 - a. Jesus had clearly claimed to be the Messiah. (See, Jn. 10:25.) Note His words: "I did tell you." He had told them time and again.
 - b. Jesus' works proved that He was who He claimed to be. (Jn. 5:19; 5:20; 5:36.)
 - c. The religionists did not believe Jesus' claims. Why? *Because* they were not His sheep. Note an important fact. Jesus did not say, "You are not my sheep *because* you do not believe"; but He said, "You do not believe *because* you are not my sheep." He was saying they did not believe because they were not His followers. This is the thread of predestination that John stresses throughout His gospel. (See Jn. 6:44-46; 6:37.) The religionists did not belong to God. They claimed to be His followers, but their claim was only a verbal profession. Their hearts and lives were far from God; therefore, what Jesus claimed, they rejected. They were not the sheep of Jesus; therefore, they rejected His claims and Words.
2. The sheep of Jesus believe. They believe in the Shepherd. (See *Sheep*, Jn. 10:27-29.)

JOHN 10:25 JESUS CHRIST CLAIMS DEITY

*Jesus answered, "I did tell you, but you do not believe. The miracles I do in my Father's name speak for me." **John 10:25***

Jesus was asked, "If you are the Christ, tell us plainly." Just in the last few days the people had heard Him proclaim the truth as forcefully as He could. The problem was not His proclaiming the fact in clear language; the problem was the unbelief of the people. They only pretended not to understand. They understood, but they refused to believe. This is, of course, the problem with most men. In unmistakable terms, Jesus proclaims...

- that His teaching is not His, but God's (Jn. 7:16-19).

***John 7:16** Jesus answered, "My teaching is not my own. It comes from him who sent me."*

- that He knows God intimately and was sent from God (Jn. 7:25-31; 8:54-59; 10:14-16).

***John 7:29** "But I know him because I am from him and he sent me."*

- that He is the Source of life and the One who gives the Holy Spirit to men (Jn. 7:37-39).

***John 7:37, 39** On the last and greatest day of the Feast, Jesus stood and said in a loud voice, "If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink." By this he meant the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were later to receive. Up to that time the Spirit had not been given, since Jesus had not yet been glorified.*

- that He is the Light of the world (Jn. 8:12; Jn. 9:5).

***John 8:12** When Jesus spoke again to the people, he said, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life." (see John 9:5)*

- that He is the Revelation of God (Jn. 8:19).

***John 8:19** Then they asked him, "Where is your father?" "You do not know me or my Father," Jesus replied. "If you knew me, you would know my Father also."*

- that He has a different origin from man (see *Incarnation of Jesus Christ*, Jn. 8:23).

***John 8:23** But he continued, "You are from below; I am from above. You are of this world; I am not of this world."*

- that if a man does not believe in Him, that man will die in his sins (Jn. 23-24).

John 8:24 *"I told you that you would die in your sins; if you do not believe that I am the one I claim to be, you will indeed die in your sins."*

- that He is the Spokesman for God (Jn. 8:26).

John 8:26 *"I have much to say in judgment of you. But he who sent me is reliable, and what I have heard from him I tell the world."*

- that He is the Son of Man who was to be lifted up on the cross (Jn. 8:28).

John 8:28 *So Jesus said, "When you have lifted up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am the one I claim to be and that I do nothing on my own but speak just what the Father has taught me."*

- that God never left Him alone; that He never sinned; that He never failed to please God (Jn. 8:29).

John 8:29 *The one who sent me is with me; he has not left me alone, for I always do what pleases him."*

- that He came from God (Jn. 8:42-43).

John 8:42 *Jesus said to them, "If God were your Father, you would love me, for I came from God and now am here. I have not come on my own; but he sent me."*

- that He is sinless (Jn. 8:45-47; Jn. 8:29; 8:54-59.)

John 8:45-46 *"Yet because I tell the truth, you do not believe me! Can any of you prove me guilty of sin? If I am telling the truth, why don't you believe me?"*

- that He is the Saviour or Deliverer from death; that a man who keeps His Word shall never see death (Jn. 8:51-53; 8:51).

John 8:51 *"I tell you the truth, if anyone keeps my word, he will never see death."*

- that He is the great "I Am" (Jn. 8:54-59).

John 8:58 *"I tell you the truth," Jesus answered, "before Abraham was born, I am!"*

- that He is the Son of God (Jn. 9:35-38).

John 9:35-37 *Jesus heard that they had thrown him out, and when he found him, he said, "Do you believe in the Son of Man?" "Who is he, sir?" the man asked. "Tell me so that I may believe in him." Jesus said, "You have now seen him; in fact, he is the one speaking with you."*

- that He is the Gate of the sheep (Jn. 10:7-10).

John 10:7, 9 *Therefore Jesus said again, "I tell you the truth, I am the gate for the sheep. I am the gate; whoever enters through me will be saved. He will come in and go out, and find pasture."*

- that He is the Good Shepherd (Jn. 10:11-13).

John 10:11, 14 “I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.” “I am the good shepherd; I know my sheep and my sheep know me.” □

JOHN 10:27–29 SHEEP

The sheep of the Shepherd believe in the Shepherd. Others may not, but the sheep do. This is what Jesus was saying. Note how He used the traits of sheep to describe His followers (believers).

1. Sheep are *receptive* to the voice of the Shepherd. They know His voice and respond to it. When He calls them, they come and do what He says. Note also that they know the voice of false shepherds. (See Jn. 10:4-5.)
2. Sheep are *known* by the Shepherd, and this knowledge leads them to trust Him explicitly. The Shepherd responds to the sheep and to their faith and trust in Him. He cares for them deeply, leading and looking after them. He even knows them individually, calling them by name (see Jn. 10:2-3). The fact that He responds to them with such care and attention gives them even greater faith and trust. They trust their Shepherd without question.
3. Sheep *follow* the shepherd. They obey Him, knowing He goes *before* them in order to remove all obstacles and dangers (see Jn. 10:4-5).
4. Sheep are *communal*. Note the sheep follow in a group. They form a commune or a fellowship of sheep. They are a body who follow the Shepherd. (See *Fellowship*, Acts 2:42.)
5. Sheep are given *eternal life*. And note: eternal life includes an abundant life while on this earth, which begins the moment the sheep become a follower of the shepherd (see *Life in Jesus Christ*, Jn. 10:10).
6. Sheep are *kept from perishing*. (See *Perishing*, Jn. 3:16.)
7. Sheep are *secure*. No man (no one, Greek) can snatch them out of the Shepherd's hand. The person who is truly in the Shepherd's hand will not be lost. The Shepherd promises this time and again (see Jn. 6:37-39). Note exactly what Jesus said. The sheep are saved from someone *trying to snatch* them away, and they are saved no matter how great the *attempt* may be. (They are secure, kept from the evil one, even the devil himself.)
8. Sheep possess a *double security* in the Owner, that is, God Himself. They are secure not only because they are in the hands of the Shepherd but because they

belong to the Owner. The Owner is God, and God is greater than all. Therefore being the greatest, no one is now able or ever will be able to pluck the sheep out of God's hand. (See Rom. 8:38-39.) (Not even the devil.) □

ACTS 02:42 FELLOWSHIP

Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day. They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Acts 02: 41-42

The fellowship wrought by the Spirit of God means more than the association existing in secular groups such as civic clubs and community bodies. There is a vast difference between *community participation* and *spiritual participation*. *Community participation* is based upon neighbourly association. *Spiritual participation* is based upon a spiritual union wrought by the Spirit of God.

The distinctiveness is this: the Holy Spirit is within the Christian believer. The Holy Spirit creates a spiritual union by melting and molding the heart of the Christian believer to the hearts of other believers. He attaches the life of one believer to the lives of other believers. Through the Spirit of God, believers become one in life and purpose. They have a joint life sharing their blessings and needs and gifts together. Note several things about fellowship that are taught by this passage.

1. Fellowship is being experienced by the new believers because they join other Christians in learning the Scriptures (apostles' teachings) and in worship (prayers and celebrating the Lord's Supper, Acts 2:41-42).
2. Fellowship forbids an unattached Christian life. Their fellowship is maintained because they "are devoted" in the Scriptures and in worship. An unattached Christian life is just impossible.
 - a. Christianity is first an individual matter, but then it becomes a social matter. The Christian is attached to Christ individually, but he is also attached to other believers. He walks with other believers in the Scriptures and in worship.
 - b. Christianity is first a spiritual organism, but then it becomes a spiritual organization. The Christian has an *inward life*, but he also takes on an *outward form* of life. He becomes a living organization with other Christian believers. He sits at the feet of the apostles' teaching and joins right in with other Christians as they worship together.

- c. Christianity makes the true believer a saint (one who is set apart unto God), but Christianity is made up of *saints* — plural. Christianity is not just one person; Christianity is many persons — *saints*. The word is often used in the New Testament, but it is never used in the singular. Christianity is Christianity because the saints *study the Scriptures together and worship together*.
- d. Christianity demands that a believer personally live out such virtues as kindness, long-suffering and love; but the believer can do this only in association with others.
- e. Christianity means that the Spirit of God has entered the believer's life, but it also means that the Spirit of God has placed the believer into a corporate body (the church), into Christian society itself. The Spirit of God indwells the corporate body of believers as well as the individual (see 1 Cor. 3:16).

3. Spiritual fellowship faces two dangers.

- a. Fellowship and society can be over-emphasized — to the point that individual salvation is missed. An individual must “accept His message” (Acts 2:41).
- b. Individual salvation and individual worship, whether through nature or by any other means, can be overly stressed — to the point that Christian fellowship and society can be missed (Acts 2:42; see Heb. 10:25).

Acts 2:42 They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.

Rom 12:5 So in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others.

1 Cor 10:17 Because there is one loaf, we, who are many, are one body, for we all partake of the one loaf.

Gal 3:28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

Eph 4:13 Until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.

Heb 10:25 Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another — and all the more as you see the Day approaching.

1 John 1:7 But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin.

Mal 3:16 Then those who feared the Lord talked with each other, and the Lord listened and heard. A scroll of remembrance was written in his presence concerning those who feared the Lord and honoured his name. □

JOHN 08:23 INCARNATION OF JESUS CHRIST

But he continued, "You are from below; I am from above. You are of this world; I am not of this world." John 8:23

Jesus was born from above or from heaven; that is, He was born of God, as well as of Mary. Therefore, Jesus is not only Man, but He is also God. He is the God-Man.

Think of it this way. A man is born of the earth, from beneath: he is born of his father and his mother. Both are of this earth, of human flesh only. Therefore, a man is only a man; he is only human flesh and blood just like his mother and father.

However, this is not true with Jesus. Jesus is Man, but He is also God. He is Man through the flesh of His mother, and He is the eternal Son of God by the miraculous act of the Holy Spirit through Mary. God incarnated His Son in human flesh and sent Him into the world through Mary (see Jn.8:12-59, esp. 14, 23, 42, 57-58).

This means something critical. The only messiah and utopia that man can find is of this world, of the physical dimension. Therefore, man's messiah and utopia fail; they waste away, deteriorate, decay, and die. But not Christ and His utopia. He is "from heaven," from the spiritual world and eternal dimension. Therefore, He and His utopia last forever. □

JOHN 10:10 LIFE IN JESUS CHRIST

"The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full." John 10:10

Life is one of the great words of the Scriptures. The word *life* (*zoe*) and the verb *to live* or *to have life* (*zen*) have a depth of meaning.

1. Life is the energy, the force, the power of being.
2. Life is the opposite of perishing. It is deliverance from condemnation and death. It is the stopping or cessation of deterioration, decay, and corruption (Jn. 3:16; 5:24, 29; 10:28).
3. Life is *eternal* (*aionios*). It is forever. It is the very life of God Himself (Jn. 17:3). However, eternal life does not refer just to duration. Living forever would be a curse for some persons. The idea of eternal life is also quality, a certain kind of life, a life that consistently knows love, joy, peace, power, and responsibility .
4. Life is satisfaction (Jn. 6:35).
5. Life is security and enjoyment (Jn. 10:10).

6. Life is found only in God. God is the source and author of life, and it is God who has appointed Jesus Christ to bring life to man. Jesus Christ gives the very life of God Himself (Jn. 5:26; 6:27, 40; 10:28; 17:23).
7. Life has now been revealed. It has been unveiled and is clearly seen in Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ shows man what life is (Jn. 1:4-5; 5:26; 1 Jn. 1:2).
8. Life only comes to a man by believing in Jesus Christ. A man outside Jesus Christ only exists. He merely has the existence of an animal. Real life is found only in God. This is to be expected and it is logically true, for God is the creator of life. As the creator of life, He alone knows what life really is and what it is supposed to be (Jn. 3:36; 5:24; 6:47). This is the reason He sent His Son, the LORD Jesus Christ, into the world: to show men what life is. When a person looks at Jesus Christ, he sees exactly what life is, exactly what it involves (Gal. 5:22-23):

=> love => patience => faithfulness => joy => kindness
=> gentleness => peace => goodness => self-control □

JOHN 03:16 PERISH, PERISHING (APOLETAI)

“For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish, but have eternal life.” John 03:16

To be lost, to destroy utterly, to lose utterly, to lose eternal life, to be spiritually destitute, to be cut off.

1. Perishing means to be in a lost state in this world. It means to be...
 - aging, deteriorating, decaying, dying.
(Mt. 8:17; 1 Cor. 15:50; Col. 2:13; 2 Pet. 1:4.)
 - without life (purpose, meaning, significance).
(Jn. 1:4; 10:10; 17:2-3.)
 - without peace (assurance, confidence, security in God's keeping). (Jn. 14:27)
 - without hope (of living forever). (2 Tim. 4:18.)
2. Perishing means to be in a lost state in the world to come. It means...
 - having to die
 - facing judgment
 - being condemned
 - suffering separation from God and all loved ones
 - experiencing all that hell is (Mt. 5:22; Lk. 16:24; Heb. 9:27). □

III. *John 10: 30–33 Jesus Claims to be One with God*

The second claim of Jesus was that He is One with God, that is, He is God Himself. But note: Jesus was not claiming to be the same person as God. He was claiming to have the same *nature* of God, to be One with God...

- in nature
- in being
- in substance
- in power
- in essence
- in glory

This is seen in the word “one.” It is neuter, not masculine. It means *thing*, not *person*. Jesus is of the very same thing, of the very same substance as God.

There is no question that this is exactly what Jesus was claiming. His claim was perfectly understood by those standing around Him. The Scripture and outline clearly show this. Note the clear accusation: “We are not stoning you for any of these...but for blasphemy, because you, a mere man, *claim to be God*” (v. 33).

John 1:1-2 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning.

John 12:45 “When he looks at me, he sees the one who sent me.”

John 14:7-9 “If you really knew me, you would know my Father as well. From now on, you do know him and have seen him.” Philip said, “Lord, show us the Father and that will be enough for us.” Jesus answered: “Don’t you know me, Philip, even after I have been among you such a long time? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, ‘Show us the Father’?”

John 16:15 “All that belongs to the Father is mine. That is why I said the Spirit will take from what is mine and make it known to you.”

Rom 9:5 *Theirs are the patriarchs, and from them is traced the human ancestry of Christ, who is God over all, forever praised! Amen.*

Col 2:9 For in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form.

1 Tim 3:16 Beyond all question, the mystery of godliness is great: He appeared in a body, was vindicated by the Spirit, was seen by angels, was preached among the nations, was believed on in the world, was taken up in glory.

1 Tim 6:15-16 Which God will bring about in his own time — God, the blessed and only Ruler, the King of kings and Lord of lords, who alone is immortal and who lives in unapproachable light, whom no one has seen or can see. To him be honour and might forever. Amen.

IV. *John 10:34–36 Jesus Claims to be the Son of God*

The third claim of Jesus was that He is the Son of God. Those who rejected Jesus had stones in their hands, and they were ready to get rid of Him. Note two things.

1. Jesus showed man's inconsistency. He referred them to their history when they called their rulers or judges "gods." Their ancestors had used the word "gods" to mean that their judges were rulers of men — rulers who had been appointed by God to represent God among men (Exo. 22:28; Psa. 82:6). Jesus simply asked, if some rulers of Israel were called "gods," why was He being accused of blasphemy for claiming to be the Son of God?
2. Jesus made a threefold claim; however, note a critical point. Jesus was not saying, "Rulers were called gods, so I am to be called a 'god' as they were." He was claiming to be distinct from all other men. He claimed that He was...
 - the One "whom the Father sanctified [set apart]." (See *Sanctify*, 1 Pet. 1:15-16.)
 - the One whom the Father sent into the world. (See *Jesus Christ, Origin*, Jn. 3:34.)
 - the Son of God. (See Jn. 1:1-2; 1:34.)

How could they reject Him? Their rulers were mere men, yet they were called "gods." He was much, much more — the very One sanctified, set apart and sent by God, the very Son of God Himself. How could they accuse Him of blasphemy when they so readily received rulers of the past as "gods" and the rulers were mere men?

John 3:16 *"For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life."* (see v.17-18)

John 9:35-37 *Jesus heard that they had thrown him out, and when he found him, he said, "Do you believe in the Son of Man?" "Who is he, sir?" the man asked. "Tell me so that I may believe in him." Jesus said, "You have now seen him; in fact, he is the one speaking with you."*

John 11:25-27 *Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies; and whoever lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?" "Yes, Lord," she told him, "I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, who was to come into the world."*

V. *John 10:37–39 Jesus Claims: God is in Him, He in God*

The fourth claim of Jesus was that God is in Him and He is in God. God's presence was proof that Jesus was the embodiment of God. God was *in* Jesus, and Jesus was *in* God. This can be called the *mutual Indwelling Presence* of God and Christ, each dwelling in the other. This simply means that each has the nature and being, the Spirit and Mind, of the other. Each has the Presence, the very Being and Spirit, of the other dwelling within Him — *perfectly*.

Note the point Jesus was making. The proof that He was the embodiment of God, that He was the One who came to earth to reveal God, is clear: God's presence is not only *with* Him; God's presence is *in* Him. He Himself *is* God. He Himself – His Person, His Being, His nature, His character, His love, His care, His just dealings, all that He is – revealed exactly what God is. Note also that Jesus asked Philip a question: “Don't you believe that I am in the Father, and that the Father is in me?” (See Jn. 14:10). This is the indwelling presence of each in the other. Jesus is One with the Father, and the Father is One with Him. They are of one Mind and Spirit, one being and nature, one purpose and work.

Col 2:9 *For in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form.*

Note a critical point: it is absolutely essential for a person to know and believe this truth. Jesus was pleading with the unbeliever:

John 10:38 *“But if I do it, even though you do not believe me, believe the miracles, that you may know and understand that the Father is in me, and I in the Father.”*

Note that Jesus' works, His miracles, prove the indwelling presence of God in Him and He in God. But they rejected His claim.

John 10:30 *“I and the Father are one.”*

John 14:10 *“Don't you believe that I am in the Father, and that the Father is in me? The words I say to you are not just my own. Rather, it is the Father, living in me, who is doing his work.”*

John 17:11 *“I will remain in the world no longer, but they are still in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, protect them by the power of your name – the name you gave me – so that they may be one as we are one.”*

John 17:22 *“I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one.”*

VI. John 10:40–42 Conclusion

Jesus retired to the area where John had first baptized, and many of John's followers began to follow Jesus. Note that many believed in Jesus. John's faithfulness in the ministry throughout this area reaped great fruit.

John 3:15 *“That everyone who believes in him may have eternal life.”* ■