

### A Strong Statement about the Eternal Security of the Believer

#### John 10:22-30

John 10:22-30 - *"Now it was the Feast of Dedication in Jerusalem, and it was winter."<sup>23</sup> And Jesus walked in the temple, in Solomon's porch.*

<sup>24</sup> *Then the Jews surrounded Him and said to Him, "How long do You keep us in doubt? If You are the Christ, tell us plainly."*

<sup>25</sup> *Jesus answered them, "I told you, and you do not believe. The works that I do in My Father's name, they bear witness of Me."<sup>26</sup> But you do not believe, because you are not of My sheep, as I said to you.<sup>[a]</sup> <sup>27</sup> My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me.<sup>28</sup> And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand.<sup>29</sup> My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of My Father's hand.<sup>30</sup> I and My Father are one."*

#### Background Notes

Verse 22 tells us, *"it was the Feast of Dedication in Jerusalem, and it was winter."* From John 7 all the way to this point in chapter 10, the events had all taken place in the autumn season, around the time of the Feast of Tabernacles.

Since then a couple of months had elapsed, and now it was winter in Jerusalem. You may not have realized that there's a winter season in the Holy Land, but there is! Winters there are certainly not as severe the winters here in New England, but it does snow occasionally in Jerusalem. In fact, it has snowed in Jericho, which is one of the lowest elevation and warmest cities in the world!

The Feast of Dedication is also known as the Festival of Lights, or Hanukkah. This festival was not one of the feasts that were ordained by God under the Law He gave through Moses. John 10 is the only place in the Bible where this festival is mentioned.

The Feast of Dedication celebrated the cleansing of the Temple that took place in the "inter-testamental period," in the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BC. When the Syrians occupied Israel under the evil Syrian dictator Antiochus, the Temple had been desecrated and polluted – even to the point of a pig being sacrificed on the altar.

But after the Maccabees rose up and the Syrians were defeated, the Temple was cleansed and re-dedicated. The re-dedication celebration was known as the Festival of Lights because after the Syrian occupation, there remained only a tiny quantity of dedicated oil for the Temple menorah (lamp stand). Amazingly, this tiny amount kept the menorah's lamps burning for 8 days, while a new supply of lamp oil was purified and dedicated for use in the Temple.

During the Feast of Dedication, or Festival of Lights, Jesus walked in the Temple, in Solomon's porch (v23). Solomon's Porch was similar to a Greek *stoa*. It was a long covered walkway that stretched along the east side of the Temple complex. But don't get the idea that this spot goes back to Solomon's time - the Babylonians had destroyed Solomon's Temple long ago. The place where Jesus walked was part of the Second Temple, or Herod's Temple, and Solomon's Porch was simply a name for the covered walkway.

Solomon's Porch was a place where the people would gather to listen to religious discussions. Rabbis would start to teach, and a crowd of Temple worshipers would gather around them to hear what they had to say. And it was here that the Lord once again addressed the Jews.

The Jews wanted Jesus to declare plainly that He was the Messiah. The Lord replied that He *had* told them plainly, but they wouldn't believe! Furthermore, Jesus said, "How much more evidence do you want?" *"I told you, and you do not believe. The works that I do in My Father's name, they bear witness of Me"*(v25).

## Background/ Teaching Points

### 1. Those who are not sheep don't believe - because they're not sheep.

That sounds like double talk at first, but that is essentially what Jesus told the unbelieving Jews in verse 26: *"But you do not believe, because you are not of My sheep, as I said to you."*

Notice what He **did not** say. The Lord didn't say, "You are not my sheep because you don't believe." That was true enough. Rather, the Lord turned that around and said, "You don't believe because you're not my sheep."

In this statement there is a definite indication of the sovereignty of God in calling a person to salvation. We're saved because God chose us! Now the Bible also teaches that a person is responsible to respond to God for salvation. So even though God sovereignly chooses us, at the same time we have the responsibility to choose God.

Both points are true - and they are not contradictory truths! How they harmonize is beyond our finite comprehension, but they don't contradict each other.

The Bible doesn't say in one place, "God chose us" and in another place, "God didn't choose us" - **that** would be a contradiction! Or if the Bible said in one place, "You're responsible to choose God," and in another place, "You're not responsible to choose God" - **that** would be a logical contradiction! But we don't find statements like that in the Bible.

But the Bible does teach that God chose us, and it also teaches that we have a responsibility to respond and choose God - and **that is not** a logical contradiction! We can't fully get our minds around that because we don't have infinite minds! It's beyond our finite minds to comprehend, but these truths are definitely taught in Scripture.

Both of these truths are seen side by side in John 6:37. *"All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will by no means cast out."* In that one verse the Lord taught both of these truths side by side, so clearly they are not contradictory.

Here in John 10:26, the "sovereignty of God aspect of salvation" is in view: *"But you do not believe, because you are not of My sheep."*

2. The eternal security of the sheep lies in the strength of the Shepherd, not in the weakness of the sheep.

***"My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me. And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand. My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of My Father's hand."***

These are some of the greatest verses in the Bible that teach the eternal security of the believer! Once you are one of Jesus Christ's sheep, you are in His flock forever! If you are saved, you can't lose your salvation.

Notice the first clause of verse 28: ***"And I give them eternal life."*** If you're a believer, you have eternal life. The Lord didn't say "you will have eternal life when you die" – no! Jesus says you have it now! And if you have eternal life now, you have it from now on - eternally! It's eternal life.

The second clause of verse 28 says, ***"and they shall never perish."*** You may stray, and you may backslide, but you will never perish. In fact, this statement is very strong in the Greek language. It could rightly be translated, ***"they will indeed not ever perish"***!

And the third clause of verse 28 says, ***"neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand. My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of My Father's hand."*** This means that if you are truly saved, no person can take you out of the Lord's hands. And Satan can't take you out of the Lord's hands. You can't fall out of the Lord's hands, and you can't jump out of the Lord's hands!

And no way did the Lord have any "exceptions" in His mind when He said that His sheep are safe in His hands! The eternal security of all the sheep lies in the strength of the Shepherd - not in the weakness of the sheep.

3. The Father and the Son are distinct Persons of the one true God.

*"I and My Father are one "(v30).*

What did the Lord mean by that statement? Certainly He meant that He and the Father were one in mind, and one in purpose, and one in action, and one in power, etc.

But the fact that the Jews took up stones to stone Him strongly indicates that they saw His statement as another claim to deity (v31). They recognized that when Jesus said, “*I and My Father are one*” He meant not only one in mind, purpose, action, and power. He clearly meant that they were also **one in essence** or nature!

And that is certainly what the Bible teaches about the doctrine of the Trinity. God the Father is fully God, and yet a distinct Person of the one true God. God the Son is fully God, and He is a distinct Person of the one true God. And the Holy Spirit is fully God, yet He is a distinct Person of the one true God.

They are **not** “three Gods” – they are **one God!** And the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit are **not** three “modes” of the one true God – that’s heresy. They are **three distinct Persons** in the **one true God**. Orthodox theology is **God is one in essence, but three in Persons**.

So “*I and My Father are one*” means that the Father and the Son are One. They are two of the three distinct Persons of the one true God.

## Practical Application

Do you have the “Good Hands” life insurance policy?

As you probably know, there’s a major insurance company that advertises, “You’re in good hands” when you’re insured with their company.

Well, those “good hands” are not perfect. In fact, some people have fallen out or jumped out of those imperfect hands! But here in verses 28-29 we read of “Perfect Hands” - the hands of the Lord Jesus and the hands of God the Father! If you’re in those hands, you’re really in Good Hands! You are held in God’s Hands - safely and securely – forever!

Have you ever been dropped by an insurance company for having too many problems or costing them too much money? Well, the “Good Hands” will never drop you! The perfect hands of God will never drop you. Colossians 3:3 says, “*For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God.*”

Maybe you’re still trusting in a “life insurance” policy of your own making. Maybe you’ve never invested in the Good Hands Life Insurance policy. The Good Hands policy guarantees eternal life insurance!

No one is born with the “Good Hands life insurance” policy. You must become an owner by trusting in Jesus Christ as your personal Savior. Do you have eternal life through the “Good Hands life insurance” policy?