

Small Group Bible Study Questions

- A) One of the ironies in John 10:22-42 is that the setting is the temple during the time of Hanukkah. It was a time to celebrate for the Jews because “the right to worship appeared to us at a time when we hardly dared to hope for it” (Josephus, Antiquities 12.316-325). It was a time to remember the “dedication” of the temple from the Maccabean revolt. Yet, in the midst of the same temple, here was Jesus. The very Person the temple was dedicated to worship was rejected. It causes me to carefully think about my own life. The Bible says that my body is the temple where God dwells (1st Corinthians 3:16), it is dedicated to Him. The things I do, the things I think, what I feel, how I live are all worship in the temple (Romans 12:1). Yet, so often, I ignore Jesus Christ and desecrate the temple all over again. Rather than worship God, I worship myself on the altar of my life. Hanukkah is a celebration of God being worshipped rightly in the temple. Is your life a “Hanukkah” celebration, or does a “revolt” need to occur in your life to “wash & clean” (consecrate) the temple for good worship once again?
- B) Jesus gives three key criterion for being part of God’s “flock” in John 10:27. Read the verse together with your group and discuss how these three “signposts” exist in very practical ways in your life.
- C) Do you think a person can lose their salvation? Can a person really know for sure they are saved? How do you know that Christ knows you (John 10:27)? How do you know you are in the palm of Christ/God’s hand (John 10:28-29)?
- D) Jesus Christ said that He was “sanctified and sent into the world” (John 10:36). How does this relate to us in our own lives of service to the Lord? How can we imitate Christ in this, is it even possible? Take time to pray for one another in your small group, especially for increased effectiveness in living a life which is sanctified and filled with “temple worship!”

Who Do You Believe?

Long Beach Alliance Church • January 23rd, 2005 • Pastor Chris Lankford

**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. “BUT YOU DO NOT BELIEVE BECAUSE YOU ARE NOT OF MY SHEEP. “MY SHEEP HEAR MY VOICE, AND I KNOW THEM, AND THEY FOLLOW ME; AND I GIVE ETERNAL LIFE TO THEM, AND THEY WILL NEVER PERISH; AND NO ONE WILL SNATCH THEM OUT OF MY HAND.
~JOHN 10:25-29 (NASB)**

1) Hanukkah In Jerusalem

- A) Jesus’ final public comments take place during The Feast of Dedication, also known as Hanukkah*, in the Jerusalem wintertime (10:22-23).
- B) Jesus, along with others, would escape the bitter cold of the outdoor areas by collecting in the colonnades around the temple area. Solomon’s portico, which was actually built by Herod, was one of these covered areas (10:23).
- C) Jesus was not in the temple area to teach, but was surrounded (ἐκύκλωσαν/ekooklosan, to surround in an aggressive manner) by others who wanted to get a “straight answer” from Him about His identity (10:23).

2) If It's A Direct Response You Want...

- A) Jesus Christ responds to the aggressive inquiry by testifying (again) that He has already told them, and in addition to His words, the works He does should validate who He is (10:25).

- B) Christ goes on to echo John 10:1-21 by contrasting these Jews (you are not my sheep) with true believers (who hear

* The Feast of Dedication (John 10:22), more commonly known as Hanukkah, is probably the best known celebration time in Judaism because of its proximity to the calendar to the Christian holiday of Christmas. The feast is not authorized in the Hebrew Scriptures (the OT), and was a relatively new institution in Jewish culture at the time of Christ. In 167 BC, the Syrian Antiochus Epiphanes invaded Jerusalem and took control of the temple. He entered the temple and sacrificed a sow (a female pig/hog) on God's altar, displacing worship to YAHWEH and replacing it with pagan worship. He also brutally persecuted the Jews, under which the death penalty was rendered for having possession of any part of the Hebrew Scriptures. Under this horrible oppression, the Jews learned the art of guerilla warfare, and eventually grew strong enough to challenge their oppressor. Under the leadership of Judas Maccabaeus (known as 'Judas the Hammer'), the Jews recaptured the temple and reconsecrated it to God on 25 Kislev in 165 BC (the month which approximately coincides with our own month of December). The festival is not one of great religious importance, and is primarily drawn from 1st Maccabees 4:36-61, an apocryphal book which is recognized for its historical usefulness, but not as part of Scripture, Jewish or Christian. The people celebrated the rededication of the temple for eight full days, thus the eight days of Hanukkah. There are some common symbols (menorah, dreidel, gelt and latkes) which mark the modern observance of Hanukkah. The menorah, which finds its original form in Exodus 25:31-40 (7-branched candelabrum) was stolen from the temple by the Syrians (it was made of gold), so when the temple was reconsecrated after the Maccabean revolt in 165 BC, a new menorah was built. Unfortunately, there was only oil for one night's lighting (the menorah was supposed to stay lit at all times in the temple, symbolizing the light of God always present to the Jews). However, rather than stay lit for only one day, the menorah in the newly consecrated temple stayed lit for eight days, with no oil added to sustain the light. This was considered a miracle of God which affirmed the revolt and reconsecration of the temple. To this day during Hanukkah, a candle is lit for each day of the eight-day festival, and special 9-branch menorah's are used to celebrate the holiday. The dreidel, a four-sided spinning top with Hebrew letters (n-Nun, g-Gimmel, h-Heh and v-Shin) is used with pennies or M&M's by Jewish children during the Hanukkah celebration as a good-natured gambling game. Tradition says that the letters on the side of the dreidel mean "a great miracle happened there," as a reminder of the Maccabean revolt/menorah miracle. The letters also refer to the rules of the game, and the tradition was probably added later to "Judaize" the game for children. Gift giving is not a significant part of the holiday, but small amounts of money (called gelt) are sometimes given. It is traditional to eat fried foods (in commemoration of the oil associated with Hanukkah), particularly latkes (lot-kuhs) which are (basically) potato pancakes. Some, or all (and more) traditions are observed by Jews in relation to Hanukkah. The 8-day holiday begins on December 26th, 2005 this year (the date varies year-to-year). Collected from various sources.

His voice, who Jesus knows, and who follow Him) (10:27).

- C) Jesus then goes on to say that those who follow Him will have "eternal life." He clarifies that true believers who he knows and who obey him will never die (10:28).

- D) Jesus then parallels who He is (no one can snatch the true believers out of My hand -- 10:28) with the Father, God (no one is able to snatch them out of His hand -- 10:29).

- E) He culminates His comments on the parallels between the Son and the Father by claiming complete unity (oneness) with God the Father. This was a unity in purpose and identity, sealed by the obedience/accomplishment of God's perfect will in Jesus Christ (10:30).

3) If You Refuse Me, I'm Heading Elsewhere...

- A) The Jews want to stone (execute) Jesus for blasphemy (10:31-33). Jesus, showing total confidence in the face of violence, questions the Jews about His works (10:32), and then about His words (10:34-36).

- B) For a final time, Jesus reasons with the Jews, knowing that they cannot challenge His works, and calls on them to see the unity (oneness) between the Father, God and Jesus Christ (10:37-38).

- C) The Jews attempt to "apprehend Jesus" but cannot, he "eludes" their grasp (both physically and spiritually). Jesus retreats beyond the Jordan river where many who knew John the Baptist's testimony of Christ believe in Jesus (10:39-42).