

THE TESTIMONY OF JESUS' WORKS

John 10:22-42

On February 23, 1996, three to four months into a pregnancy, Mary Clarke (name changed) of Downers Grove, Illinois, remembers, *"I was not feeling very well. I was having a hard time breathing and was very dizzy."*

Her doctor said she should come in for an examination. As the nurse started to examine Mary, she said, *"We'll be able to hear the baby's heartbeat."* The nurse tried to pick up that heartbeat for a while but was unable to locate it.

When the doctor came into the examining room, the nurse asked him to try to locate the baby's heartbeat. The doctor tried for 10 or 15 minutes without success. He then decided to move Mary to an ultrasound room.

In the ultrasound room, the doctor located the baby and tried again to hear the heartbeat. He couldn't, so he asked the nurse to call another doctor. The second doctor tried to locate the heartbeat—for 15 minutes or more—but could not.

At this point, the doctor told Mary and her husband, Ron, *"I'm sorry, but the baby has died. I can't tell you why, but these things happen. I'm very sorry, but you will have to be induced."* Mary says, *"Ron's heart and my heart were broken. We had lost our precious baby."*

The nurse took Mary and Ron to the birth center and explained what would happen when they induced labor. The doctor also requested testing to find out why Mary was having difficulty breathing.

"As I was lying in bed," Mary says, *"I prayed that God would watch over our child until we could meet him or her in heaven. My heart was broken, but I was filled with the hope that I would one day see my child."*

Meanwhile, Ron called Mary's sister, who called a woman at their church, **Pat Bailey**, to ask her to pray. When Pat got the call, she said something startling: *"That baby's not dead. Tell them to double-check, to get a second opinion."*

Ron and Mary talked about it and decided they would talk to the doctor one more time before anything was done, just to confirm the decision. To appease the couple, the doctor ordered another ultrasound.

Back in the ultrasound room, a new nurse, who did not know why this couple was there, started the ultrasound. In a moment she said matter-of-factly, *"And there's the heartbeat."*

Mary asked her, *"Are you sure the baby is okay?"* The nurse told her, *"The baby's heartbeat is perfect, no problems."*

Mary turned and looked at the nurse from the birth center. Her jaw dropped, and her eyes were as round as saucers. The nurse called the doctor to come look at the monitor. *"I can't believe it,"* he finally said. *"If I had not seen this, I would not have believed it. This is not the same baby I saw on the other ultrasound."*

As a precaution, Mary was admitted to Good Samaritan Hospital for observation. The doctor came to her room later. *"I would like to give you an explanation for what happened,"* he managed, *"but I have none. A diagnosis like this is always verified by a second doctor. But,"* he went on, *"there are times when medical science cannot explain everything. Sometimes the only explanation is that God intervened."* Mary says, *"I did not need an explanation. I knew that God had performed a miracle, and that was all I needed to know."*

On August 22, 1996, Jamie Andrew Clarke (name changed) was born— a healthy, beautiful boy. The doctor who delivered him was the same doctor who had seen the lifeless baby on the ultrasound. He said to Mary and Ron, *"This baby is special."*¹

You and I realize that God performed a miracle for this family. The Jewish leaders we have been reading about in John chapter 10 probably knew of many miracles, some quite spectacular, that Jesus had worked. They knew of the feeding of the 5000, of the paralyzed man who was able to walk, and the man born blind who could now see as well as they could. But in spite of these wondrous occurrences they would reveal their spiritual blindness and respond with comments like *"You should not have done such a thing on the Sabbath."* If they had been around when Jamie Andrew Clarke was born they probably would have said to the doctors, *"You will be punished for saving that baby's life. It must have been God's will for it to die. You interfered with God's will and should suffer the punishment of death by stoning."* Rather than rejoicing in the joy of a miracle from God, they stood by the laws they had created for their own power and glory. We will see it again in today's lesson, and we can only hope that no one who has been following along in this study of John has any doubt that Jesus is God, because of the things He has said and the miracles He has performed. So let us pick up our study by reading verses 22-30 of John, chapter 10.

John 10: 22-30 NAS:

*22 At that time the **Feast of the Dedication** took place at Jerusalem; 23 it was winter, and Jesus was walking in the temple in the portico of*

¹ Citation: Kevin A. Miller, vice president, Resources, Christianity Today International, in *More Perfect Illustrations: For Every Topic and Occasion*, (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 2003), WORDsearch CROSS e-book, under: "MIRACLES".

Solomon. 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."

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.*

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

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

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

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

³⁰ *"I and the Father are one."*

The "***Feast of the Dedication***," also referred to as Hanukkah or "*the feast of lights*," takes place in December, near the time of the Christian Christmas celebration. It was a feast originated by **Judas Maccabeus** to commemorate his purifying of the temple after it had been defiled by **Antiochus Epiphanes** around 167 BC. This feast began on the eighteenth of December and continued for eight days.

ANTIOCHUS (IV) Epiphanes lived from 215–164 BC. and ruled from 175 to 164 BC. He has the dubious reputation of being one of the cruelest tyrants of all time. He was a dedicated follower of the Olympian god Zeus, and hoped to unify his territories by spreading Hellenistic (Greek) culture, law, and religion. In so doing he came into violent conflict with the Jews in Judah. At the beginning of his reign Antiochus IV meddled in the appointment of Jewish high priests. Sometime around 168 BC, he captured Jerusalem, prohibited Judaism with cruel persecution, looted the temple, and tried to establish the worship of Greek gods by building an altar to Zeus over the altar of burnt offering in the Jewish temple. This was the worst form of blasphemy imaginable against the Jewish God.

By Antiochus's proclamation, Judaism was made illegal under pain of death and Jews were forced to participate in heathen festivals. Open rebellion broke out in 167 BC under the leadership of the Jewish priest **Mattathias**. After his death in 166 BC, Mattathias was succeeded by his son **Judas Maccabeus** who escalated the war and achieved repeated victories over the Syrian generals. Antiochus was unable to personally lead the suppression of the Jewish revolt because of serious rebellions in Parthia and Armenia. He assigned this task to his regent **Lysias** who was empowered to depopulate Judah, enslave the Jews, and leave the land desolate. But this did not happen. Judas defeated the Syrians and they fled from Judah. Then Lysias personally led a larger army against the Maccabees but was soundly defeated. In 164 BC, Judas restored the temple and reintroduced the daily sacrifices. By 160 BC every vestige of the power of Antiochus Epiphanes had been erased from Jerusalem.²

² Elwell, Walter A.; Comfort, Philip Wesley: *Tyndale Bible Dictionary*. Wheaton, Ill.: Tyndale House Publishers, 2001 (Tyndale Reference Library), S. 66.

Antiochus Epiphanes was known to be irrational and deranged to the point of madness, and the success of Judas Maccabeus combined with the Syrian king's inability to personally suppress the Jewish revolt helped drive Antiochus to further madness. After these events he withdrew to Persia where it is said he died insane.³ It is really not a good idea to blaspheme the one and only God.

Now with that little bit of history to clarify what was being celebrated at the Feast of Dedication (Hanukkah), we see in verse 22 that it was winter and that also suggests that the weather was not very good. This could be the reason Jesus is seen walking in **Solomon's porch**, or portico. Solomon's Porch (Colonnade) was a roofed porch with tall stone columns located on the east side of the Temple. It was named for Solomon because it was believed to rest on portions of the original Temple built by Solomon. This portico was a common place for teaching, so it would have been an appropriate place for Jesus to be walking and probably teaching as he walked.⁴

We see right off in verse 24 that the Jewish leaders are challenging Christ. "*Tell us plainly that You are the Christ.*" As if Christ's works had not already made it plain.

However, Jesus had never plainly told the Jewish leaders in Jerusalem that He was the Messiah because they would have thought He would become a military leader or political liberator for them. Therefore, Jesus wisely avoided using that term. Besides, most of these questioners did not want to follow Jesus in the way that He wanted to lead them. They hoped that Jesus would declare Himself the Messiah, but only if He intended to get on with their political agenda and drive out the Romans. So they wanted to hear a clear statement from Jesus' lips: "*If you are the Messiah, tell us plainly.*"

It is doubtful, however, that a plain declaration would have convinced them, for they had already made up their minds on the issue. Some of these Jewish leaders undoubtedly also hoped He would claim to be the Christ so they could accuse him of telling lies or catch Him in the act of blasphemy and report Him to the Roman governor as one who desired to take over a position of authority from Caesar, an offense punishable by crucifixion (John 10:31,33, 39).⁵

If I were in Jesus' position here, my patience would have run out. I might have said something like:

“How many times do you *dunderheads* need to be told who I am? I have already made it clear not only by what I say but also by the miracles I have performed for those who might need further proof. These miracles alone speak of who I am. The problem with you guys is not one of knowing but one of **believing**. You just do not want to give

³ Ibid.

⁴ *Life Application Concise New Testament Commentary*, John 10:23.

⁵ Ibid, John 10:24.

up the god you have created in your own minds for your own comfort and, no matter what I say or do, nothing is going to change your minds.”

“If you belonged to God, you would know that I am the Good Shepherd because you would know Me just as a sheep knows his shepherd’s voice. Because you refuse to believe that I am from God, you will not be given eternal life in the way I give it to those who believe Me. Furthermore, those who believe in Me will never lose their salvation. They are secure for eternity. Your refusal to believe is what will send you to Hell for eternity. It is your choice and you will have no one to blame but yourselves when you find yourselves there. And by the way, it will be forever. There are no paroles or second chances once you’re dead.”

Paul writes in Romans 11:29: *“The gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable.”* That means no one who ever accepts Christ as his or her Savior will ever be lost.

John 3:36 NAS:

³⁶ *“He who believes in the Son has eternal life; but he who does not obey the Son will not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him.”*

John 5:24 NAS:

²⁴ *“Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears My word, and believes Him who sent Me, has eternal life, and does not come into judgment, but has passed out of death into life.”*

Your place in Heaven is guaranteed, not because of how good you now are, but only because of how good Christ is. Paul confirms all of this again in Romans 8:38,39NAS:

³⁸ *For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers,*
³⁹ *nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

Can you think of anything that is not included in this statement? Once you have salvation, the Holy Spirit comes to reside within you and He is your guarantee of Heaven. Please do not ever lose sight of that.

Jesus concludes His comments with a statement in verse 30 that makes it perfectly clear that there can be no separation between Him and the Father. They are one in mind. God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit make up the Trinity. Jesus was telling them again that He is God.

It is important to keep in mind that Jesus was talking about His sheep—true believers—and not counterfeits. Scripture tells us that the dog and the pig will go back into sin (2 Peter 2:20–22); but the sheep, being a clean animal, will follow the Shepherd into the green pastures. The false teacher will talk about his faith and even his works, but he will never make it into Heaven according to Matthew 7:13–29 NLT:

¹³ *“You can enter God’s Kingdom only through the narrow gate. The highway to hell is broad, and its gate is wide for the many who choose that way.*

¹⁴ *But the **gateway to life** is very narrow and the road is difficult, and **only a few ever find it.***

¹⁵ *“Beware of **false prophets** who come disguised as **harmless sheep** but are really **vicious wolves**.*

¹⁶ *You can identify them by their fruit, that is, by the way they act. Can you pick grapes from thornbushes, or figs from thistles?*

¹⁷ *A good tree produces good fruit, and a bad tree produces bad fruit.*

¹⁸ *A good tree can’t produce bad fruit, and a bad tree can’t produce good fruit.*

¹⁹ *So every tree that does not produce good fruit is chopped down and thrown into the fire.*

²⁰ *Yes, just as you can identify a tree by its fruit, **so you can identify people by their actions.***

²¹ *“Not everyone who calls out to me, ‘Lord! Lord!’ will enter the Kingdom of Heaven. Only those who actually do the will of my Father in heaven will enter.*

²² *On **judgment day** many will say to me, ‘Lord! Lord! We prophesied in your name and cast out demons in your name and performed many miracles in your name.’*

²³ *But I will reply, ‘I never knew you. Get away from me, you who break God’s laws.’*

²⁴ *“Anyone who listens to my teaching and follows it is wise, like a person who builds a house on solid rock.*

²⁵ *Though the rain comes in torrents and the floodwaters rise and the winds beat against that house, it won’t collapse because it is built on bedrock.*

²⁶ *But anyone who hears my teaching and ignores it is foolish, like a*

person who builds a house on sand.

²⁷ *When the rains and floods come and the winds beat against that house, it will collapse with a mighty crash.”*

Christ is saying that those who hear His teaching and obey it are wise and they are building their lives on a solid foundation. Anyone who hears the truth of God and ignores it is a fool according to Jesus and they will be responsible for their own destruction and eternity in Hell.

²⁸ *When Jesus had finished saying these things, the crowds were amazed at his teaching,*

²⁹ *for he taught with real authority—quite unlike their teachers of religious law.*

Most of us know people who claimed to be saved and then went back into sin, but their doing so only proved that they never really trusted Christ to begin with. Jesus did not promise security to anyone but His true sheep. As you review Jesus’ teaching about His ministry as the **Good Shepherd**, you note that there are three aspects to His relationship with His sheep:

- 1) He has a *loving* relationship because He died for the sheep.
- 2) He has a *living* relationship because He cares for the sheep.
- 3) It is also a *lasting* relationship, for He keeps His sheep and not one is lost.⁶

So what was the reaction to Jesus’ statement that He and God the Father are One? Let us read on and see.

John 10:31-33 NAS:

³¹ *The Jews picked up stones again to stone Him.*

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

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."*

Can you beat that? These leaders have before them a Miracle Worker, Someone who goes about doing good, and what do they want to do to Him? They did not even seem to pause to reflect, “*What if what He’s saying is true? Do we want to be guilty of stoning God Himself?*” No, instead they just picked up rocks, ready to hurl them.

You may remember that the Jewish leaders also wanted to stone Jesus back in John 8:59, when He claimed He had been alive even before Abraham and that Abraham had recognized Him even back then as the Messiah. This time they were going to stone Him because Jesus claimed to be God. This was no less than blasphemy in the eyes of the

⁶ Wiersbe, Warren W.: *The Bible Exposition Commentary*. Wheaton, Ill.: Victor Books, 1996, c1989, S. Jn 10:22.

Jews because they refused to accept Jesus as One who had been sent from Heaven. Jesus again referred to the many miracles He had performed since His ministry began as adequate proof that He was who He claimed to be. What more could they possibly need to believe? John writes in John 20:30-31 ESV:

³⁰ Now Jesus did **many other signs** in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book;
³¹ **but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God,** and that by believing you may have life in his name.

But the Jewish leaders completely ignored Jesus' miracles. All they could or wanted to see was a man who committed blasphemy by daring to claim that He was God. To them Jesus was a man who had dared to make Himself out to be God. For this reason they felt justified in killing Him.

John 10:34-38 NAS:

³⁴ Jesus answered them, "Has it not been written in your Law 'I said, you are gods'?
³⁵ "If he called them gods, to whom the word of God came (and the Scripture cannot be broken),
³⁶ do you say of Him, whom the Father sanctified and sent into the world, 'You are blaspheming,' because I said, 'I am the Son of God'?
³⁷ "If I do not do the works of My Father, do not believe Me;
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."

Jesus continues to engage the Jewish leaders in dialogue. He points out that even if they do not want to believe He is God, at least consider that He is god (little g) in the sense of Psalm 82. So Jesus appeals to their own Jewish Old Testament **law** since the Jews claimed the law was the standard they lived by. Let us look at the passage Jesus was referring to.

Psalm 82:1-7 NLT:

¹ God presides over heaven's court; he pronounces judgment on the heavenly beings:
² "How long will you hand down unjust decisions by favoring the wicked?
³ "Give justice to the poor and the orphan; uphold the rights of the oppressed and the destitute.
⁴ Rescue the poor and helpless; deliver them from the grasp of evil people.
⁵ But these oppressors know nothing; they are so ignorant! They wander about in darkness, while the whole world is shaken to the core.

⁶ I say, ***You are gods***; you are all children of the Most High.
⁷ But you will die like mere mortals and fall like every other ruler.”

In this psalm, God is speaking to the Hebrew judges. God’s Word had delegated a certain status to these judges as His representatives. Jesus used Psalm 82:6 to deny their accusation and stop their actions. The picture in Psalm 82 is that of a court, where God has assembled the Hebrew judges, to warn them that they too will one day be judged. The Hebrew word *elohim* can be translated as **“god” or as “judges”** (as in Exodus 21:6 and 22:8–9). It is also one of the Old Testament names for God. The Jewish rulers certainly knew their own language and they knew that Jesus was speaking the truth. If God called human *judges* “gods,” then why should they stone Him for applying the same title to Himself?⁷

John 10:36 is crucial because it gives a double affirmation of the deity of Christ. First, the Father sanctified (set apart) the Son and sent Him into the world; and second, Jesus stated boldly, *“I am the Son of God.”* He gave them the *“plain answer”* they asked for, but they would not believe it.⁸

Could they have believed? Jesus invited them, urged them, to believe, if only on the basis of His miracles (John 10:37–38). If they would believe the miracles, then they would know the Father, and that would open the way for them to know the Son and believe in Him. It was simply a matter of examining the evidence honestly and being willing to accept the truth. Once again, they tried to arrest Him but He escaped and left the area completely. He did not return to Jerusalem until *“Palm Sunday,”* when He presented Himself as Israel’s King.⁹

For Christ to have said less than to affirm that He was the Son of God would have been to tell a lie. To affirm his Sonship was certainly not blasphemy, it was truth. If the Jews could not test what He said, they could at least judge on the basis of His works. It should be possible to progress through the works a person does to faith in the person.¹⁰

John 10:39-42 NAS:

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

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

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

⁷ Wiersbe, Warren W.: *The Bible Exposition Commentary*. Wheaton, Ill.: Victor Books, 1996, c1989, S. Jn 10:22

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid

¹⁰ Pfeiffer, Charles F.; Harrison, Everett Falconer: *The Wycliffe Bible Commentary: New Testament*. Chicago: Moody Press, 1962, S. Jn 10:34

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Many believed in Him there.

When things became this violent, Jesus knew it was time to get out of town because attempting to reason with them any further at this point would be futile. In addition His ministry was not yet complete and He needed to move on to other things. So He made His way out of the city, beyond the Jordan, where John had once baptized new converts to Christianity.

Why did Jesus go there? Several possible reasons. For one thing, it was a safe retreat; the Jewish religious leaders were not likely to follow Him there. Also, it was a good place to prepare for His final week of public ministry when He would lay down His life for the sheep. As He remembered His own baptism by John, and all that He had experienced at that time (Matthew 3:13–17; John 1:20–34), it must have given Him strength for the suffering that He knew He must soon endure.¹¹

The common people continued to seek Jesus, and He continued to minister to them. It is worth noting that John the Baptist's witness was still bearing fruit long after he was dead. Your witness for Jesus can do the same. His witness to Jesus Christ led many to salvation and eternal life. John was not a miracle worker, but he was a faithful witness who pointed to Jesus Christ.

Note verse 42: "*Many believed in Him there.*" The leaders may not have understood the message but many other people did. The leaders did not heed the testimony of Jesus' works, but the people did. They observed the miracles and listened to Jesus' words and as a result they believed.

You have seen the works of Jesus, maybe not in the same ways the Bible-time people did, but you have seen them nonetheless. You have seen His amazing creation, including the marvels of outer space. You are aware of the tremendous beauty and complexity of the human body. You have seen lives completely turned around after an encounter with Jesus. You have also heard His words. You have heard them through these messages, and through our worship music. You may well have heard them on the radio and TV, or read books about them. So what are you doing about the testimony of the works of Jesus? Are you like the Jewish leaders who rejected Him, or like the people who believed Him?

Have you responded personally to our Lord's three great declarations recorded in this chapter?¹²

1) He is the **Door**. Have you "*entered in*" by faith so that you are saved?¹³

2) He is the **Good Shepherd**. Have you heard His voice and trusted Him? After all, He

¹¹ Wiersbe, Warren W.: *The Bible Exposition Commentary*. Wheaton, Ill.: Victor Books, 1996, c1989, S. Jn 10:22.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Ibid.

laid down His life for you.¹⁴

3) He is the **Son of God**. Do you believe that? Have you given yourself to Him and received eternal life?¹⁵

Remember His stern warning: *“If ye believe not that I am He, ye shall die in your sins”* (John 8:24).¹⁶ Remember also His promise, *“he who hears My word, and believes Him who sent Me, has eternal life, and does not come into judgment, but has passed out of death into life”* (John 5:24).

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Ibid.