

# OpenTheo

## John 10:22 - 10:42



### Gospel of John - Steve Gregg

Steve Gregg, in his discussion on John 10:22 - 10:42, delves into Jesus' teachings on being the ultimate shepherd of his flock, which includes both Gentile and Jewish sheep. Gregg suggests that while Jesus may have celebrated the Jewish festival of Hanukkah, his teachings extended beyond any particular religious group. Jesus' works are done in the name of the Father, and those who follow him are part of the Father's authorized agents. Gregg emphasizes that those who refuse to follow Jesus are not part of his flock and will not believe his teachings.

### Transcript

Let's turn to the 10th chapter of John. This chapter divides into two equal halves. The first 21 verses occur on the tail end of a story that began in chapter 9 where Jesus healed a man who was blind by putting mud in his eyes and telling him to go wash in the pool of Siloam.

The man then had a confrontation with the religious leaders, the Pharisees, who were trying to get him to somehow change his story so as to make it easier for them to reject the thesis that Jesus is from God. And they didn't want to believe that Jesus is from God. One of the problems was that Jesus had done this on the Sabbath day and they were more committed to the Sabbath than they were committed to the truth apparently because they just couldn't get past the idea that a man who seemed to be doing the works of God might do them in a way that they would interpret as a breach of the Sabbath law.

Anyway, they kicked the man out of the synagogue. Jesus looked him up, brought the man to faith in himself, and apparently collected to himself another disciple thereby. Chapter 10 then opens just as a continuation of how chapter 9 ended.

Jesus is in a conversation, or has been in the last verses of chapter 9, he was in a conversation with the Pharisees. And he begins chapter 10 as a monologue beginning with his characteristic, Verily, verily, I say unto you. The translation we're looking at, the New King James says, Most assuredly, I say to you.

In the Hebrew, or the Aramaic that Jesus spoke, it was almost certainly amen, amen. Which was a way of getting someone's attention and saying this is a certainty. This is a truth worth paying attention to and believing.

Jesus frequently said it, amen, amen. The King James version translates, Verily, verily. Modern translations do whatever they wish with it.

In this case, it's most assuredly I say to you. And with this, amen, amen, Jesus begins what is actually a monologue and shifts from the dialogue of the previous chapter. In those first 21 verses, he has introduced the idea that he is the good shepherd and that he is the door to the sheepfold.

There's kind of a small parable within a larger parable. This isn't really strictly speaking a parable, but it's like a parable. When I say it's not really a typical parable, Jesus when he told parables told about a certain man or a certain woman or a certain somebody.

His parables usually weren't I am something. That's more really what we call a metaphor than a parable. I am the good shepherd.

I am the door. But the point is there's a smaller metaphor about Jesus being the door that is encompassed within the metaphor of I am the good shepherd. And he's drawing a contrast between himself and the religious leaders who had just kicked this blind man out of the synagogue.

They were not good shepherds. They were in fact more like thieves and robbers because they sought to be leaders. They sought to gain control over the sheep, but they didn't come through the door, which Jesus identified as himself.

Anyone who would really be a leader of God's sheep must come through Jesus because Jesus is the chief shepherd. As Peter said in first Peter chapter five, he said the elders who are among you, I exhort who am also an elder and also a witness of the sufferings of Christ, the partaker of the glory that shall be revealed, shepherd the flock of God, which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly, not for filthy lucre, but of a willing mind. And he says, and then when the chief shepherd shall appear, when the chief shepherd Jesus comes, you'll be rewarded, he says.

Jesus is the chief shepherd, and anyone who wishes to shepherd God's people must come through Jesus, must be appointed by Jesus. And the Pharisees obviously were doing everything they could to avoid including Jesus in their program, and therefore they were not true shepherds. They had no true access to the sheep.

They were like thieves and robbers that tried to get at the sheep without going through the true shepherd. They were also like hirelings, and he brought that up too. He said there's a difference between a true shepherd and a hireling.

The hireling takes care of the sheep for a fee, but he doesn't really care about the sheep. He just cares about his fee. He cares about his wages.

If the job really becomes dangerous, if he sees a wolf coming, for example, rather than go out and risk his life to save the sheep, he'll run away because it's just not worth it. He's just in it for the money. He's not serving out of love for the sheep.

He's serving out of love for himself, and therefore he's got to look out for himself. When danger comes, he runs away. But the good shepherd, Jesus gives his life for the sheep.

The good shepherd puts himself in harm's way, and he says, I am the good shepherd. I am laying down my life for the sheep. He said, I have the power and the authority to lay it down.

I have the authority to take it up again. And he said, I have other sheep too that you don't know about. He means, of course, the Gentiles.

His disciples were all Jewish and did not know that there would be Gentiles who would be in the flock. They knew well enough from the Old Testament that Israel was called God's flock and that God was called the shepherd. By the way, when Jesus said, I am the good shepherd, it was tantamount to saying, I'm God, because the Old Testament identified Yahweh as the good shepherd.

In Psalm 23, David said, Yahweh is my shepherd, I shall not want. In Ezekiel 34 and 37, Yahweh said, I will shepherd my people, I will shepherd my flock, I will gather them, and so forth. In Isaiah 41, it says, He shall lead his flock like a shepherd.

He shall gather the lambs in his arms and carry them in his bosom, and shall gently lead those who are without young. This is Yahweh he is talking about. In the Old Testament, Israel was God's flock and God was the shepherd.

Jesus says, I'm the shepherd, and I'm here to call my flock, my sheep. And he said, my sheep will know my voice. This is the case with sheep.

It's possible, and many have observed this, that many shepherds can put their flocks in the same fold at night. But the sheep actually respond to their own shepherd's voice. In fact, some shepherds have said that their sheep even recognize their own names when called.

And Jesus said, my sheep know my voice. They don't know the voice of strangers, they know my voice, the good shepherd, and they follow me. And so what he's saying is, he has come to Israel, which is the big fold.

And he says, I'm calling my sheep out, and they're hearing me, and they're coming. This man who was born blind, as soon as Jesus appeared to him, the man responded

completely submissively. He actually laid prostrate before Jesus and said, Lord.

He called Jesus his Lord. He became a disciple. Whereas the other shepherds, the Pharisees, were totally contrary.

They were opposed to Jesus. This man was part of the remnant of Israel. They were the true sheep that Jesus had come to call.

And the true remnant recognized the Messiah when he came. They recognized the voice of the shepherd when they came out. And Jesus said, I have other sheep, too, in verse 16.

I've got to go get them as well. They're not of this fold. They're not part of Israel.

They're Gentiles. And he says, I'll bring them also. And then there'll be one flock and one shepherd.

The Gentile sheep and the Jewish sheep, there are in both categories. In the Jews, there are some who are remnant, whose hearts are toward God. They are the remnant, and they will come when he calls.

Among Gentiles, there are also some who are already his sheep. There were already Gentiles whose hearts were soft toward God. He said, I'm going to go find them and bring them in, too.

You know, when Paul was in Corinth, and he was opposed there by those in the synagogue, Jesus actually appeared to him in a vision and said, don't worry, Paul, I have many people in this city. Well, there weren't many converts yet. He had just gotten there, and he was the first Christian to arrive there.

And Jesus said, don't worry, Paul, I have many people in this city. Well, who were they? They weren't Christians. Not yet.

They were Gentiles. Gentiles who had never heard the gospel and in all likelihood were unfamiliar with the law of Moses. And Jesus knew them to be his sheep.

I have many people in this city. Don't worry. And of course, Paul found them.

Paul preached there for 18 months, and Jesus drew those sheep, too, and brought them in along with the remnant of Israel to become one fold, and there being one shepherd. So this is what Jesus said up through verse 21. But we come to new material at verse 22, and this is exactly the halfway point of the chapter, but it's two months or so later than the previous.

The last we knew, it was the Feast of Tabernacles in chapter 7, and the Feast of Tabernacles is in September or October. When we come to verse 22, it's now the Feast

of Dedication. We know that feast better by the name Hanukkah, and that, as we know, is in late December.

I think we're all familiar with the fact that the Jews celebrate Hanukkah right around the same time that Christians have traditionally celebrated Christmas. And so this is the festival. It's called the Feast of Dedication.

It was a relatively new ceremony when Jesus was there, because it celebrated something that had happened less than two centuries earlier. In 167 BC, the temple had been desecrated by Antiochus Epiphanes, the Syrio-Greco ruler who oppressed Israel, and he sacrificed a pig on an altar to Zeus in the temple in Jerusalem. The Jews saw that as a desecration of the temple that made it unusable until such a time as they could get the oppressors out and rededicate the temple and cleanse it from that impurity.

And so for three years, the temple was out of use. No sacrifices were offered in the temple for three years until 164 BC. Now, during that time, there was a war, a guerrilla war staged by one family initially, an old priest named Mattathias and his four or five sons, and they had like-minded people that went with them.

They went up in the woods and conducted raids upon the Syrian oppressors for three years until they'd actually driven the Syrians out. And once the oppressors were gone, the Jews were able again to rededicate the temple, which they did. And none of this is recorded in scripture.

This is all recorded in like the first book of Maccabees and Josephus and other historians. But as I understand the story, and it may be that Michael here, who happens to have been raised Jewish, might be able to correct me if I'm wrong. As I understand, when it came time to rededicate the temple, it was going to be an eight-day ceremony, but they didn't have enough oil for the lamps to burn that long.

They had a shortage of the special oil that they needed, and it was going to take, I think, eight days to get a full supply. And the oil in the lamps miraculously continued to burn and did not extinguish for eight days. And therefore, they called it the Festival of Lights.

Today, the Jews light candles or lamps for eight days in celebration of the rededication of the temple or Hanukkah. Is that essentially right? Yeah. Okay, good.

They had enough for one day. They had enough for one day, and yet it lasted for eight. Eight days.

Right. So, a little bit like the story of Elijah and the woman who had enough food, a little bit of flour and a little bit of oil, enough to feed her and her son for one day. But instead, because she dedicated it to the Lord and gave it to the prophet Elijah, God caused there to be more oil and more flour there every day for three and a half years, supernaturally.

So, a similar story is told with reference to the rededication of the temple in 164 B.C., and that is Hanukkah. So, it's obviously only a short time before Jesus' own lifetime. And the Jews, therefore, had been celebrating it a much shorter period of time than, say, something like Passover, which was 1,400 years before the time of Christ.

Passover, Pentecost, Tabernacles, these were very ancient feasts to the Jews, but Hanukkah was relatively recent at the time here. Now, was Jesus celebrating Hanukkah? He may have been. We find that he's in Jerusalem again.

It was not mandatory for the Jews to go to Jerusalem for Hanukkah. The law did dictate that they come to Jerusalem for the Feast of Passover and Pentecost and Tabernacles, but Hanukkah, I assume, was not mandatory. But Jesus was there in Jerusalem again, now in late December, and it says it was winter.

It doesn't say it was late December. It says the Feast of Dedication. It was winter.

We know that it was late December. And Jesus walked in the temple in Solomon's Porch. Now, Solomon's Porch was a portico, a covered portico.

Possibly he was there because it was bad weather. It was wintertime, and it was in a covered area in the temple precincts. It was on the eastern side of the outer court of the temple, near the entrance to the temple.

And it was also the location in the Book of Acts we read that the apostles sometimes met there and evangelized there. In the Book of Acts, it was in Solomon's Portico or Solomon's Porch. Jesus at this time was walking there, and the Jews surrounded him and said to him, How long do you keep us in doubt? If you are the Christ, tell us plainly.

Now, this is one of the things that many people don't understand, if they don't look at the Gospels carefully, is that Jesus did not go around proclaiming himself to be the Christ, not plainly. Lots of people think that Jesus might have been, of course people who are not Christians, might have been a pretender to be the Messiah. When you bring up the fact that Jesus fulfilled so many prophecies of the Old Testament that pertain to the Messiah, their response is, well, you know, he knew the Scriptures, he knew what the prophets had said, he just kind of played his cards right and did the things that the Messiah was supposedly predicted to do, so that people would believe he was the Messiah.

Any shrewd Jew who is familiar with the Scriptures well enough could have done the same. Well, maybe, in some cases, if that person really was trying to convince people he was the Messiah. Obviously, some of the Scriptures that Jesus fulfilled were things that man doesn't have the choice whether he does them or not, like where he's born.

Men don't make the decision where they will be born, or what year they'll be born, or what tribe they'll be born. All those things, of course, he fulfilled those things without any

possibility of engineering that. But some of the things he could have manipulated, certainly riding into Jerusalem on a donkey to fulfill Zechariah 9, any man could do that, I suppose.

The point is, though, that is presupposing that this man wanted to convince people he was the Messiah, and therefore he artificially fulfilled these prophecies so that people would think he was the Messiah. Yet Jesus, in his ministry, did not conduct himself like somebody who wanted to convince people he was the Messiah. For one thing, he didn't do the things, and didn't even attempt to do the things, that the Jews thought the Messiah was supposed to do.

There were false messiahs, plenty of them, but they always did the things that the Jews wanted the Messiah to do, namely, stage a revolt against Rome. Jesus never attempted to do that, and when they tried to get him to do that, he would not cooperate. He did not make any effort to convince anybody that he was the Messiah.

In fact, he had never publicly said, I am the Messiah. As far as we know, there are only three times in Jesus' recorded ministry where he ever mentioned that he was the Messiah. Two of those were in private settings.

One, to the woman at the well, when no one but she and he were there. Once, at Caesarea Philippi, when no one was there but his disciples, and it was they that said he was the Messiah, and he confirmed it. God bless her to you, Simon Barjona, flesh and blood has not revealed this to you but my Father.

And the third time, when he was put under oath on the Sanhedrin and asked, are you the Messiah? And because he was put under oath in the name of God, he honored the name of his Father and answered. He had been silent up to that point. And so, forced to speak, he confessed it was true, he is the Messiah.

Now, these are not situations that look like a man is trying to convince the world he's the Messiah. He's very reticent to speak of it in those terms. And, of course, he could say to the woman at the well, I who speak to you am he, the Messiah, and it wouldn't cause a problem because she saw the Messiah as one who would come and expound on religious matters.

But the Jews in Judea thought the Messiah would come as a political leader. It would be much more volatile for Jesus to tell the Jews in Judea that he was the Messiah. It would get them, you know, starting to organize themselves as a militia to back him up.

So he never had, in Jerusalem, ever plainly said, I'm the Messiah. Now, he said things that they could have taken that way, easy enough. Even, I am the good shepherd of the sheep, which he said earlier in this chapter, could be understood to be a messianic claim.

But he didn't use the term Messiah, and so they said, well, how long are you going to

keep us in suspense? If you're the Messiah, tell us plainly. And, again, he speaks evasively to them. 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. In other words, he's saying to them the same thing he said to John the Baptist when John the Baptist was in prison. And John also thought that Jesus was not behaving very messianically, like he wasn't doing what John himself thought the Messiah would do.

And he sent messengers from prison to Jesus. And he said, are you the one who is to come, or do we look for another? And Jesus didn't answer him directly either. He said to the messengers, you go tell John what you see.

What do you see? The blind have their sight restored. The lame are walking. The poor have the gospel preached to them.

All of these things were things alluded to in Isaiah 35 and Isaiah 61 that the Messiah would do. But Jesus didn't say, yes, tell John I'm the Messiah. He said, tell him what you see.

Tell him the works I'm doing. Let him make up his own mind about that. And that's what he's saying to these people.

Make up your own mind. Let the works I do speak for themselves. You put it two and two together.

You're not going to hear me claiming to be the Messiah. But you can look at what I'm doing and reach some kind of a conclusion about that. Because the works that I do in my Father's name, they bear witness of me.

Notice that Jesus did the works in his Father's name. That's helpful to us to know because we're told that we are to act in Jesus' name. Often we think of in Jesus' name meaning that we tag the words in Jesus' name.

On at the end of our prayers or at the end of our attempts at exorcism or whatever we do. It says in Colossians 3.17, whatever you do in order to do all in the name of Jesus. So what's it mean to act, to do anything in the name of Jesus? Well, many times, especially when it comes to praying in the name of Jesus, we just assume it means you say whatever prayer you're going to pray and then just say in the name of Jesus.

And then you pray it in Jesus' name. But that's not what it means. It doesn't have anything to do with tagging that phrase at the end of your prayer or anything else you're doing.

To act in the name of Jesus means you act on his authority. And you act with power of attorney as his agent. You're acting in his name.



You're acting in his place. You're authorized by him to do the things that he wants done. And therefore, you as his agent with the power of attorney, you are able to go in as his agent.

You're a part of his body. You're his hands and his feet. You're his flesh and his bones.

You are Christ on the earth. He has feet and hands on the earth still. And we are them.

And we do the work of Christ in his name. That is, as his agents. And that's what he means when he says, the works I do in my father's name.

He doesn't say, I'm going to say, he healed in the name of my father. I pray in the name of my father. Come out of them, you demons, in the name of my father.

He didn't ever use that formula. But he said he was doing everything in his father's name. That means he was authorized by his father to do it.

And he was doing the works of his father. He was his father's agent. He was there in the place of his father acting in his father's interest.

Just like an attorney would act in your interest as you've authorized him to do. That's what it means to act in another's name. We act in Jesus' name.

Jesus acted in his father's name. By the way, just a couple of chapters later, in chapter 13, in verse 20, in John 13, 20, Jesus said, Most assuredly I say to you, or verily, verily, or amen, amen, I say to you, He who receives whomever I send receives me. And he who receives me receives him who sent me.

That is, I am sent as the agent of one whom you are receiving when you receive me. I am sending you as my agent. And so those who receive you are receiving me because I'm authorizing you.

You cannot refuse or neglect somebody's authorized agent without refusing and neglecting that person who authorized them. The authorized agent is the one, is an extension of the one who sent him. And Jesus said, I've been sent by my father, and anyone who receives me is receiving my father.

I'm sending you, and anyone who receives you, who I send, receives me. So, that's the same thing. As we are acting in his name, he was acting in his father's name.

And he says, the works that I do in my father's name, they bear witness of me. Verse 26, but you do not believe because you are not of my sheep. As I said to you, my sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me.

Now, he's back on this sheep thing. That's the last thing he was talking about in the earlier part of this chapter, which happened months earlier. He may have been gone and

come back, but he is at least revisiting this topic of him being the shepherd and his sheep being present and recognizing him as the good shepherd.

But these people who were opposed to him, they were not his sheep, and therefore they do not believe. Now, if you're familiar with the arguments of those who are of Calvinistic persuasion, you know that John chapter 10, this particular segment, is very popular in their arsenal of proof texts. They have not only this verse, but some of the verses that follow as the proof of some of their points.

One of their points being that of total depravity. That is, a person cannot believe in Jesus unless they are elect. And then they can only believe in Jesus because he has elected to regenerate them, bring them from death to life so that they are now alive and can now repent and believe.

If he does not regenerate them first, they cannot repent or believe. And he will only regenerate those that he has formerly elected. And so Jesus says here, you do not believe because you're not of my sheep.

And so it is argued by some that he's saying, you see, a person can't believe in Christ unless they're one of the elect. My sheep means one of those that I have foreordained to be saved from the foundation of the world. And since I didn't foreordain you from the foundation of the world to be saved, you are incapable of believing.

Well, it seems to me like his words are intended to make them feel ashamed. I don't see how they'd be ashamed if he said, well, you can't believe in me. Because I didn't choose you before the foundation of the world, before you were ever born.

I mean, that might make me sad to hear, but it wouldn't make me feel ashamed. I wouldn't feel like I had anything to do with it. It hardly puts any guilt on me.

If I can't believe for the simple reason that God chose that I shouldn't believe, well, let him take the responsibility then for my not believing. I can't see any way that it lands on me. But if he's saying, I have sheep here in Israel who are the faithful remnant.

They are my sheep not because they were predestined before the world began to be my sheep, but they are my sheep because they have earlier in their lives made decisions to be faithful to God. And now, since they've been faithful to God, God has given them to me to be my sheep. And those who have already been part of the faithful remnant of Israel are my sheep.

You are not. You are not my sheep. You are not part of the faithful remnant.

You have not in your earlier life made decisions to be faithful to God. You have taken a different course. You have hardened your heart against God.

And that's why you can't believe in me because I'm not the first time. My words are not the first exposure you've had to God. You've been exposed to Moses and the prophets.

You've been exposed to the word of God from your childhood. And you have at some point in your time hardened yourself against that. Your eyes you have closed.

Your ears you have stopped. That's how Jesus described the people who were not his disciples when he gave parables. Remember when his disciples said, why do you speak to the people in parables? He said, well, because hearing they may hear and not perceive, and seeing they may see and not understand or whatever.

He said in Matthew 13, their ears they have stopped and their eyes they have closed, lest they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears and be converted and be healed. They have stopped their ears and their eyes earlier. Therefore, he's not giving them any more light.

He's concealing his message from them because they have already chosen sides before this. When Jesus came, Israel already had within it a faithful remnant who had chosen to be faithful to God and those in Israel who had chosen to be rebellious against God. And it is those who were hypocrites and rebellious that he came to denounce.

They were not his sheep. Not necessarily because of anything that happened before the foundation of the world. I mean, it may be.

It's not impossible that he could have predestined them before the foundation of the world, but this passage wouldn't necessarily prove that. It doesn't say anything about that. Therefore, it cannot be used as a proof text for such a point as that.

You'd have to get that somewhere else. All he's saying here is, you people don't believe me because you are not people who are my sheep. Well, who are my sheep? People who listen to me and follow me.

You're not doing that. If you don't listen to me and follow me, then you can't believe me. He says in verse 27, My sheep hear my voice, 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. I and my Father are one.

Now that statement, I and my Father are one, we'll have to talk more about. But in the context, he's clearly saying that my hand and the Father's hand are the same hand. He says no one can take them out of my hand.

My Father is greater than everybody, and no one can take them out of my Father's hand.

And he and I are one. So his hand and my hand are the same hand, is what he's saying.

It might seem like I'm not a powerful man here on earth. Jesus was meek and he was mild and he was not, you know, asserting himself. He might not look like the kind of person who could really protect the sheep from wolves and such.

He was lamb-like himself. He seemed holy and harmless and separate from sinners. How could he protect the sheep? How could he guarantee that no one could snatch them out of his hand? Well, he says because it's my Father, really, who's got them in his hand.

Being in my hand is the same as being in my Father's hand. I may not look impressive, but my Father is greater than everything. And it's his hand that they are in.

They are his people. They're in his hand. And the reference to being in the hand of the shepherd is an idiom that is found in Scripture elsewhere.

It's kind of a common idiom. In fact, there is a song that has sometimes been sung. Come let us worship and bow down.

Let us kneel before the Lord, our God, our Maker. Do you remember that old worship song? It was very popular at one time. It's from Psalm 95, verses 6 and 7. Psalm 95, 6 and 7. Oh, come let us worship and bow down.

Let us kneel before the Lord, our God, our Maker. For he is our God. And we are the people of his pasture and the sheep of his hand.

Now, the sheep of his hand, again, is the idea that the shepherd's hand, he's got his hand on his sheep. His sheep are in his hand. They're in his control.

They're under his protection. And so, Jesus says, my sheep are in my hand. And my hand is no different than the Father's hand.

No one can snatch them from that. Now, several things, several words in this section, especially verses 28 and 29, seem serviceable to make Calvinistic points, especially of the perseverance of the saints. The idea that if you're really a Christian, you'll never fall away.

Which is a very nice doctrine. And one that would be very nice to believe, if you could be sure that you were one of the ones it's talking about. You see, the problem with the doctrine that if you're really a Christian, you'll never fall away, is that if you end up falling away, you never were a Christian.

And since there are many people who seem to be Christians, for years and years, and have a very convincing testimony, but then they do fall away, according to this doctrine, they never were Christians. Which is scary. Because it means that all those years that they and everybody else believed they were Christians, all those years when they had

convincing assurances that they were Christians, according to this doctrine, since they eventually fell away, they weren't Christians even then.

Because they would have persevered. This, of course, means that if you believe that doctrine, you could never be sure that you're really a Christian. Until you can be sure that you won't fall away.

Since some people do. I mean, that's an observable fact. Not a doctrine.

You don't have to read the Bible, although you can read about it in the Bible. In the Bible, some people fall away, and it's predicted that others will fall away. Some will depart from the faith, Paul said.

But, if the doctrine is true, that true Christians never fall away, that means that the many who do, that we have observed, and that are predicted to, they never really were Christians at all. And some of them looked like Christians so convincingly that they themselves thought they were Christians, and had, as near as can be ascertained, convincing assurances of being Christians, but then it turned out they weren't. And since some do fall away, it means that maybe you could too.

And if you did, that would only mean that you weren't a Christian earlier. So, that doctrine is scary, really. If you could know for a fact that you're one of the elect, then it's a reassuring, oh, the elect could never fall away.

But how do you know if you're an elect? Well, the only sure way of knowing is that you don't fall away. You see, according to these teachers, you can have all the convincing proofs of being a Christian, but the final proof is that you persevere to the end. And you can think you have the Holy Spirit, you can think your sins are forgiven, you can think you're a true believer.

You can think that you love the brethren. You can think that you're obedient to Christ and He's your Lord. You can think all those things, but if the day comes when those aren't true anymore, then they weren't ever true.

And if you've been around as long as I have, or even a much shorter time than I have, you have observed people who had those convincing evidences of being Christians, they don't have those evidences anymore because they're not locked with Jesus anymore. And therefore, according to this doctrine, they weren't Christians no matter how much they thought they were. And you have to ask the Calvinists, then, how do you know you are a real Christian? Oh, well, we can know that we are.

Well, how can you know? Well, we know because we have the Holy Spirit. Well, these people would have said they have the Holy Spirit. How do you know that they weren't as convinced as you are convinced? Well, that's different because it's us.

We're different. How so? Well, we know. We have assurance.

Well, these people had assurance. What really makes the difference? The only thing that makes a difference between the person who really is saved and isn't in their mind is that one so far has persevered and the other one has not. But, of course, the one who has persevered so far, who can predict? Maybe they will not persevere to the end.

And if they don't, it'll simply mean not that the doctrine is false, but that they were false. They only thought they were true. So, what does this mean? It means you can have no actual assurance of salvation if this doctrine is true.

If the doctrine is true that a true Christian can never fall away, then until you die faithful and did not fall away, you can't really know whether you're really a Christian. You can think so, hope so, be fairly convinced, but never have total assurance. Whereas the Bible says we can have assurance.

John said, These things I have written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life. I know that I have eternal life. Why? Because I believe in Christ.

There's assurance of that. Do I know that I will believe in him till I die? I certainly am convinced that I will. But Paul said, If anyone thinks he stands, let him take heed lest he fall.

And don't be too cocky about it. Because if you think you can't fall, you may be surprised. Once you start being too sure of yourself.

But I do believe that as long as I am not sure of myself, but I'm sure of Christ, as long as I'm trusting Christ, I'm safe. No one can pluck me out of his hand. No one can pluck me out of the Father's hand.

I am secure there. Now I can be a fool and stop being one of his sheep, in which case I won't be in his hand anymore. His sheep are in his hand.

How do I stop being a sheep? Well, what's he say? The description of his sheep. My sheep hear my voice. They follow me.

So, as long as I'm hearing his voice and following him, doesn't that qualify me as a sheep? What if the time comes when I'm not listening to him anymore and not following him? Well, that means I'm not a sheep anymore. Well, who is in his hand? His sheep are in his hand. No one can steal them from him.

But, it is obvious that some people who are his sheep can wander off. This is true in the Old Testament certainly. And the New as well.

In Isaiah 53, 6 it says, All we like sheep have gone astray. We have turned everyone to

his own way. Isaiah is talking about the apostate Israel.

The apostate Judah. They were God's sheep and they've gone astray. Now, were they all rescued? Some of them were.

Some of them weren't. Is it possible to go astray and stay astray even when you're one of God's sheep? It is, but you cease to be his sheep. Jesus defines being a sheep not by what race you are of.

Of course, you can't stop being Jewish. You can't stop being a Gentile. You can't change that.

If you were saved by being a Jew or a Gentile, then that couldn't change. If you were saved by being circumcised, well, once you've done that, that can't change. But, those aren't the things that save you.

What qualifies you as one of his sheep is that you hear him, you listen to him, you follow him. So, the issue is are you following him? If so, then you're his sheep. What if the day comes that you decide not to follow him? Well, you won't be a sheep anymore.

What, then did someone pluck you out of his hand? Nobody plucked you out of his hand. As long as you're determined to follow him, as long as he's your Lord, as long as he is your shepherd, as long as you're his sheep, you're safe. You decide to reinvent yourself as an unbeliever, redefine yourself as not a sheep, well, then there's no guarantees for you.

And that's why the Bible gives so many warnings to people who are Christians about the dangers of falling away. No one can pull you away from Christ, but you can allow yourself to leave him if you are fool enough. What he's saying is my sheep are secure.

I believe 100% in the security of the believer. A believer, by definition, is someone who believes. If you're a believer, you're secure.

If you stop being a believer, you're not secure anymore. As long as you're trusting Christ, nothing can take you from him. The devil isn't strong enough.

A persecuting government, the Roman Empire, the Roman emperors who persecuted the Christians, Adolf Hitler, the communist governments that persecuted the Christians, they can't take you from God. God will protect you as long as you are his sheep. But there are people who used to follow him and don't follow him anymore.

They were his sheep by his own definition, but they are now not his sheep by his own definition. We have to let Jesus define things, not theologians. And Jesus has been faithful to give us the definitions of the terms he's using.

Now, he does say of them, and this is another Calvinist proof text in verse 28, I give

them eternal life and they shall never perish. Who shall never perish? His sheep. And who are his sheep? People who are hearing him and following him.

So, if you are hearing him and following him, you will never perish. This is a promise that only applies to his sheep. He has given us eternal life.

But, as it says in 1 John chapter 5, this is the promise that he has promised us, even eternal life. And this life is in his Son. He that has the Son has life.

He that does not have the Son of God does not have life. So, what if you had the Son at one time and you don't have him anymore? Because you've strayed and forsaken him and refused to follow him anymore. Well, then you did have eternal life when you had the Son, but you don't have it when you don't have the Son.

The eternal life he gives us is in himself. It's the life that is in the vine that the branches participate in. As the branches abide in him, then the life of the vine abides in the branches.

The connection of the branches to the vine is the guarantee of the continued experience of the life of the vine bearing fruit in the branches. But Jesus said, if any man does not remain in me, he is cast forth as a branch. And they wither and they gather them and burn them.

Why? They are worthless. They are not worth keeping around. Do they have life in them? Not anymore.

The branch that is disconnected from the vine that did not remain in him, as Jesus put it, obviously they had to have been in him at one time or they could never be defined as a branch that didn't remain in him. They were in him, but they are not now. What happens? Is the life in them? No.

I thought it was eternal life. Wasn't it eternal? Sure. It's eternal life.

Every branch in the vine has it. But a branch that didn't abide in him isn't in the vine. The eternal life is still there in the vine, but the branch is not experiencing it because it's disattached from the source of eternal life.

The life is eternal, but it's in his Son. And he that has the Son has life. As long as you are abiding in Christ, you are secure.

You have eternal life. You will never perish. But if you no longer abide in Christ, you are no longer his sheep.

And there is no promise to those who are not his sheep. Except that they will wither and be gathered and burned. That's the promise.



So, this statement that they shall never perish is very much like several other statements in the Gospel of John that all of them seem to be used to prove the perseverance doctrine. For example, when Jesus said to the woman of the well, whoever drinks the water I give shall never thirst. Or, when Jesus said in John chapter 6, he that eats me, the bread of life, the bread that I give, will never hunger.

These statements are, you know, if a person eats me, they'll never hunger. Isn't that a proof that they'll never fall away? Well, no. It's always in the present tense.

Whoever is eating me shall never hunger. Whoever is drinking the water I give shall never thirst. Whoever is my sheep shall never perish.

As long as somebody is in that condition that he describes, then they have the guarantee that he promises. If they cease to eat him, then they will hunger again. If they cease to drink, then they will thirst again.

If they cease to be sheep, then they will perish. And we can see that this form of sentence means just that by comparing it with something in John chapter 3, a similar statement, but with the roles reversed. In John chapter 3, in verse 36, Jesus said, or John said, somebody said, He who believes in the Son has everlasting life.

That is, whoever is believing. That's present tense. Whoever is believing in the Son has eternal life.

But notice this, and he who does not believe, present tense, he who is not believing, the Son shall not see life. Whoever is presently not believing shall not see life. Well, not as long as he's not believing.

Obviously, there are people who at the present time are not believing, but in fact they shall see life because they will change their status from being an unbeliever to being a believer. People do get converted. There are people who come out of darkness into the light.

There are people who are not His sheep who become His sheep. There are people who were not believers and become believers. Therefore, when he says, whoever is not believing shall not see life, it doesn't mean shall never ever under any conditions see life.

Of course they will see life if they stop being unbelievers. And the same is true that whoever believes shall not taste of death, shall never die. That's what he said in John 11 where he says, I'm the resurrection and the life.

He that believes in me, though he were dead, yet he shall live. And whoever lives and believes in me, present tense, shall never die. Well, that's another proof text for perseverance, but they're failing to see the way the structure of that sentence works.

Whoever is believing, so long as he is believing, presumably he'll believe continuously, as long as he's believing he'll never die. And as long as these people are not believing, they will never live. But there's no prediction here that they will always not believe.

There is no prediction that those who currently believe will always believe. This is a conditional thing. And likewise, when Jesus says, My sheep, I give them eternal life and they shall never perish, yeah, as long as they are what He calls His sheep.

And that's people who hear Him, listen to Him, follow Him. So, there is security for the sheep. There is security for the believer.

And there is no one who will ever be forced against their will to depart from Christ. There's no outside influence that could possibly force you to abandon Christ. No one can pluck you out of His hand.

Nothing but your own rebellious foolishness could ever separate you from Christ. And you don't have to do that. That's up to you.

You can believe Him just like you believe Him now. If you believe Him now, it's because you choose to. If you keep choosing to, then you'll keep being a believer and you'll never die.

You'll never perish. You'll have eternal life, as you do now, for the duration. That's what the Gospel of John teaches.

That's what the whole New Testament teaches, as I understand it. And I will not allow myself to understand it in any way that doesn't accommodate all the biblical data. So, I mean, I believe that the biblical data compels this interpretation.

Though some verses taken by themselves may sound otherwise, when you see them in their context, you can see that sometimes people get the wrong impression. Now, when He said in verse 30, I and my Father are one, this bothered the Jews again. And it says, then the Jews took up stones again to stone Him.

This is not at all the first time. In fact, in chapter 5, it doesn't say that they took up stones to stone Him. It says that they sought to kill Him.

And for the same reason as here. It says, because He said that God was His Father, making Himself equal with God. So it says in John chapter 5, in verse 17 and 18, especially verse 18, therefore the Jews sought all the more to kill Him.

Because He not only broke the Sabbath, but also said that God was His Father, making Himself equal with God. They didn't like that. They didn't like Him making Himself equal with God.

In fact, they considered that to be blasphemous and worthy of death. And so they sought

to kill Him. It does not say in John 5, 18 that they picked up stones, but that's the most likely way that they sought to kill Him.

Stones were the most ready at hand implements of death that could be used. And it was also the case that in many instances the law said to use stoning as a method of death. In chapter 8, Jesus had said another similar statement that got them to pick up stones.

In chapter 8, in verse 58, Jesus said to them, Most assuredly I say to you, before Abram was, I am. They recognized this as a self-attribution of the divine name. And so what? Verse 59, they took up stones to throw at Him.

But Jesus hid Himself and went out of the temple. Now for the third time, they take up stones or they attempt to kill Him on the spot. And always for the same reason.

They're always seeing Him as a blasphemer. Because He keeps saying things that to their ears sound like He's saying He's God. And so here, in chapter 10, in verse 31, Then the Jews took up stones again to stone Him.

And Jesus answered them, Many good works I have shown you from My Father. For which of those works do you stone Me? The Jews answered Him, saying, For a good work we do not stone you. But for blasphemy, and because you, being a man, make yourself God.

Jesus answered them, Is it not written in your law, I said you are gods? This is a quotation from Psalm 82, verse 6. And He says, If He called them gods to whom the word of God came, meaning the people to whom the psalm was addressed, He called them gods. Now if He could call them gods, and He says, And the scripture cannot be broken. Do you say of Him whom the Father sanctified and sent into the world, You are blaspheming because I said I'm the Son of God? Now, in the immediate context, He has not said He's the Son of God.

He didn't use that phrase in the immediate context. But He did use it back in chapter 5. The first time they tried to kill Him. They said, How can you do these things on the Sabbath? And He said, Well, my father works every day of the week.

And so I'm his apprentice. I do things the way he does. So I'm going to work every day of the week too.

And then that's when He called, because He called God His Father. They thought He was making Himself equal with God, and He was. At least He was suggesting that He had privileges equivalent to those of God.

Most people had to observe the Sabbath, but God didn't. And so Jesus didn't. He's essentially saying that what God is allowed to do, I'm allowed to do.

That certainly is making Yourself equal to God, at least in privilege. And they said, You

make Yourself equal to God by calling Yourself the Son of God. We're going to stone You for that.

He said, Because I said I'm the Son of God, You're going to stone Me? I, the one whom the Father has sanctified and sent into the world, You're going to stone Me because I said I'm the Son of God? What would You do to the psalmist who said to his readers, I said you are gods? In fact, the one who said I said is God Himself in the psalm. It's an oracle of God speaking Himself. Are you going to stone Him because He said those people were gods? That's what Jesus is saying.

The point He's making is very similar to arguments He made on other occasions in defense of either Himself or of His disciples when they were criticized and in trouble. For example, when His disciples were criticized for picking grain and rubbing it in their hands on the Sabbath. They were breaking the Sabbath.

They said, Well, haven't you heard what David did when he ate the showbread? Why don't you pick on him? How come you give him a pass? He was breaking the law and my disciples are breaking the Sabbath. He was breaking the law of the showbread. But you give David a pass.

You are inconsistent. When your heroes do these things, you don't mind. When my people do them or when I do them, you're using a double standard.

You'll condemn me for doing something similar to what one of your heroes did. Now, in this particular case, He's making the same kind of argument. You're showing inconsistency here.

You're judging by a double standard. You're going to stone me because I said I'm the Son of God. That sounds relatively less blasphemous than saying someone's God.

I mean, it may well be that in saying I'm the Son of God, I am making myself equal with God. Whether that's true or not is not what Jesus is going to debate here. He's just saying it's simply inconsistent of you to stone somebody for saying such a thing as that when a much more alarming, much more shocking verbiage is found in your own Scriptures from the mouth of God Himself speaking to whom? People.

And He said, I said you're gods. So it seems like you guys live with that. You guys don't get upset about that.

You even consider that to be inspired Scripture. You consider that to be a holy utterance. And yet when I say something that's relatively less shocking, you can't abide that.

You want to kill me for that. So what Jesus is doing is what He's done on other occasions. He's pointing out that their intolerance for Him and His behavior is simply an inconsistency because they're not using the same standard to judge other situations that

might be considered to be the same principle.

In this case, the principle of somebody being called the Son of God or being called even a god. Now this matter of Psalm 82 and this statement, I said you're gods, certainly needs to be looked at a little bit. Jesus did not expound on it, but because He mentioned it, people sometimes misunderstand what He meant.

For example, New Age people who say we're all gods. They say even Jesus said you're all gods. No, He didn't.

Jesus did not say you are all gods. He said it is written in your law. I said you are gods.

In other words, what He's saying is somewhere in your scriptures, somebody said to somebody else that they were gods. That's not the same thing as Jesus affirming that we're all gods, nor was even the statement made to everybody. It was made to some individuals who happened to be the judges of Israel.

It's true it did call them gods. As you see it in Psalm 82, the psalm begins, God stands in the congregation of the mighty, or actually, the mighty will do. And it says, He judges among the gods.

Now the gods there is Elohim. Literally the word Elohim means mighty ones or gods. It is sometimes a reference to God Himself.

He's sometimes called Elohim, like in the very beginning of the Bible. In the beginning, God, Elohim, created the heavens and the earth. Yet the word is plural and is therefore used frequently to speak of the false gods of the heathen.

The gods, the Elohim of the heathen. But more than that, the etymology of the word goes back to the word mighty. And therefore many scholars think the most literal translation of Elohim is mighty ones.

And so here God is criticizing somebody who are referred to as the mighty or the Elohim. Could be translated the gods. And He says to them, how long will you judge unjustly and show partiality to the wicked? He says, defend the poor and fatherless.

Do justice to the afflicted and the needy. Deliver the poor and needy. Free them from the hand of the wicked.

This obviously is the kind of rebuke that you give to corrupt magistrates. Corrupt judges. Judges who take bribes from the rich in order to oppress the poor.

This happened all the time. The prophets of Israel were continually bringing this up as a complaint. Against the leaders of Israel.

They were continually neglecting justice for the widows and the orphans and other

people who couldn't grease their palms because they didn't have enough money. And their rich oppressors could always get the courts to judge in their favor against the innocent. Because the rich could pay the judges off.

And that is a common injustice in courts. And it was in Israel. And it looks like this psalm is critiquing the judges of Israel.

Now it calls them the mighty. It calls them the Elohim. We'll say more about that in a moment.

And then it says in verse 6. I said you are Elohim. I said you are gods. And all of you are children of the Most High.

By the way, children of the Most High is pretty comparable to what Jesus said. I'm the Son of God. And they're going to stone him for that.

But Jesus says, hey, you've got that kind of language addressed to people in the Old Testament. I said you are gods. You're all of you children of the Most High.

This sounds pretty alarming if you're going to hold a standard consistently. And stone everyone that says things like what Jesus said. But notice this.

I said you are gods. And all of you are children of the Most High. But you shall die like men.

And fall like one of the princes. You people are mortals. You people are not gods.

I may have used that term in speaking about you. But that's not, don't let it go to your head. Don't think you're really divine.

Don't think you're really deities. You're people. You're mortal.

I may have called you gods. I may have called you children of the Most High. But you're going to die like anybody else.

Because you're not gods. You're people. And so why did he call them gods? Well, again, the word Elohim could mean mighty ones.

And it could mean that they hold a position of power in the government. Which they do. Or it might even be intended to be translated as gods.

After all, when Jesus quotes it, he uses the word theoi, gods, not mighty ones. Jesus quotes this verse as gods. In the Hebrew it might be translated mighty ones.

But in the Greek, it's not that flexible. When Jesus quotes it and we have it in the Greek in John chapter 10, it's theoi, gods. So why would he call them gods? And when did he say that they were gods? I personally believe, I've never heard a commentator bring this

connection, but in my own reading I've assumed that he's referring back to Exodus 22-28.

Exodus 22-28. In the midst of a number of statutes and laws that God is giving, he says to Israel, You shall not revile Elohim. Now the New King James translates it as God.

If I'm not mistaken, I think the King James translates it as the gods. In any case, it is Elohim, which can be translated either way. Nor curse the ruler of your people.

Now in the parallelism of the Hebraic literature, cursing and reviling are the same idea. And it's possible that the rulers of your people are being called the Elohim. You should not revile the Elohim or curse the rulers.

Like the Elohim are the rulers. Remember Paul quoted this verse when he was frustrated at the injustice shown to him before the Sanhedrin and the high priest ordered him to be struck when he had done nothing wrong and he lashed out verbally at the high priest. He says, God shall strike you, you whited wall, because you judge me, you sit in judgment of me according to the law, but you violate the law.

And then someone said, do you revile God's high priest like that? And Paul said, oh, I didn't know he was the high priest. Because it is written, you shall not curse the ruler of your people. So Paul quotes this passage.

But what I'm thinking, although I could be mistaken, and I've always known this could be a mistake, but it also would connect well with Psalm 82, that the Elohim in this verse, Exodus 22-28, may be parallel and therefore equivalent to the rulers. Thus the rulers in this particular law are referred to as the Elohim, the gods. Why would he call the rulers the gods? These rulers, these judges, had only one obligation, and that's to stand in the place of God and represent God's laws, communicate God's laws.

They were like God's representatives. They were like little gods standing in God's place. To call them gods, as it were, with a small g, is a concession to saying that they stand like God to judge the people.

And in Psalm 82, it's almost like saying, I almost regret having called you that, because now you think you really are gods. I said you were gods, true, back in Exodus 22-28. I did use that term.

But let's get this straight. You're not gods. You're people.

You're going to die. So don't think you're gods. Now, it is strange that the word would be used to speak of judges, but we can see that it is in Psalm 82, and it may well be that that is the case in Exodus 22-28 as well.

In any case, it provided for Jesus a great defense. And Jesus was not trying to speak

about the merits of calling people gods or not calling people gods. The fact is that there were people who were called gods, and Jesus was able to appeal to that and say, why doesn't this offend you? It obviously doesn't, so how can you be so offended by what I've said? You're not being consistent.

And when he talks about it, he says in verse 35, and the Scripture cannot be broken. This is a strange expression, broken, to refer to the Scripture. And almost all translators render it that way.

The Scripture cannot be broken. You'd think he would say the Scripture cannot be violated, the Scripture could not be invalidated, but he says the Scripture cannot be broken. What's that mean? Well, it's not at all clear what it means.

It's the only statement of that kind in the whole Bible, and it's not self-evident. What I think he's saying is this. The Scripture cannot be broken into little pieces and categorized into two classes.

These ones are convenient, these ones are inconvenient. And we'll accept the ones that are convenient and not the ones that are inconvenient. This Scripture, I said, your gods, at the moment is very inconvenient for you gods because it shows you to be hypocrites, it shows you to be inconsistent, it deprives you of any complaint against me.

But nonetheless, you don't have the convenience, you don't have the authority to break up the Scripture and accept parts of it and reject other parts of it. It's all one piece, the Scripture. You have to accept it all or reject it all.

You can't break it up and divide it into categories and accept some and reject the rest. I think that's what he means there. And he says in verse 37, If I do not do the works of my Father, do not believe me.

But if I do, though you do not believe me, believe the works that you may know and believe that the Father is in me and I in him. Therefore they sought again to seize him, but he escaped out of their hand. Now, notice verse 37.

If I do not do the works of my Father, do not believe me. Now everyone can tell he was doing works of some kind, even supernatural works. But supernatural works are not always the works of God.

There are magic arts. There are demonic works. Even Paul said that the man of lawlessness will come with signs and lying wonders done through the power of Satan.

Apparently there are supernatural works that could be written off as Satan's works. The Jews knew that very well. They said that he cast out demons, not by God, but by Beelzebub, the prince of the demons.



It was well understood that not all miracles were from God. And yet Jesus said, you can tell that mine are. How? Not because they were stupendous, because who knows? Demonic miracles might be stupendous too.

They were clearly the works of God because they were accomplishing the very things that would be like God to do. What did he do? He turned water into wine. So does God do that.

He does it all the time. Through vines, of course. Through grapes.

They take water out of the environment and turn it into wine, ultimately. That's a work of God. Jesus didn't do things like the mythological gods did in the Greek myths, where trees talk and men turn into horses and things like that.

God doesn't do that kind of stuff, so Jesus didn't do that kind of stuff. The works he did were works that are clearly the works that the Father does. You're already familiar with what my Father does.

He does it all around you. I do it too. I multiply fish and bread.

So does my Father. You take one little grain of wheat and you plant it, and it multiplies into more. My Father's been multiplying bread for you for hundreds of years.

He multiplies fish. This is something that God has always done. That's why there's so many fish.

God doesn't always do it immediately, miraculously, but it's the kind of thing He does. The works I'm doing are not the kinds of things the devil does. They're the kinds of things my Father does.

If the works I'm doing don't resemble my Father's works, then don't believe me. Now this is really important because there are people today who do various kinds of things that look like they may be supernatural, and they want us to believe them, that they're supernatural. There are people whose ministries, they feel, are credited or endorsed by their works.

And what are their works? Well, sometimes there are all kinds of strange phenomena. Not so much recently, but back in the 90s, a lot of people wanted me to get on board with a movement that was coming out of Toronto where the main phenomena were people were falling down, laughing, sometimes barking like dogs, roaring like lions, and these were said to be the moving of the Holy Spirit. And people were saying, why are you skeptical about this? Well, Jesus said, if I don't do the works of my Father, don't believe me.

I've never seen God turn a person into a dog or a lion. I've never seen, in the Scripture,

God blessing someone by knocking them over on their back and making them unconscious. I've never seen... Those don't have any connection to anything God has ever done.

Some of those things have close connections to things the devil has routinely done. Demon-possessed people have barked like dogs and growled like lions for ages. Long before this revival came along, this was an established behavior of demon-possessed people.

And I'm not saying that these people in Toronto are demon-possessed. I'm just saying that what they're doing isn't like what my Father does. It's more like what the other guy does.

And it would seem strange to me if the Holy Spirit was doing a wonder today that He would imitate the devil instead of imitating God. One thing I like about A. W. Tozer is he sometimes just summarizes a truth that's really obvious into a simple sentence. One thing Tozer said many times was God always acts like Himself.

And that's helpful to know. Because sometimes we are asked to believe that something that's going on is God. Well, is it? Is He acting like Himself? Or is He doing something that's not very much like Himself? A lot more like something else.

You see, the Holy Spirit, we know what the Holy Spirit wants to do. The Bible says He wants to make us like Jesus. We never read that He wants to make us like animals.

But He does want to make us like Jesus. And if you can find that Jesus fell on the ground and laughed uncontrollably and acted drunk and barked like a dog, well, then maybe I'll believe that those works are of God. Jesus said, if I'm doing the works that are my Father's works, then believe Me.

But if I'm not, then don't believe Me. He authorized people not to believe Him if His works didn't look like the works that God does. And that's a pretty good principle.

If anyone professes to be doing the works of God, look at them. Are they like God's works? Or not? If not, then I would take Jesus' counsel. Don't believe them.

And that's why I remain skeptical about some of that stuff. And it's not so much that I'm just a naysayer and that I don't believe in the supernatural. I do.

I do believe in the supernatural. I believe in healing. I believe in prophecy.

I believe in exorcism. I believe in speaking in tongues. I believe in supernatural things that the Holy Spirit has historically done.

And there might even be things that I have no biblical record of Him doing, but if I saw them today, they would so resemble the things that God does, I'd say, I see my Father in

that. I see the works of my Father here. But they have to be like what my Father does to be convincing.

Otherwise, Jesus says, don't believe it. Now Jesus said in verse 38, If I do the works of my Father, though you do not believe Me, believe the works. Let the works be convincing to you.

If these works I'm doing are the kind that God does, that you may know and believe that the Father is in Me and I in Him. Now Jesus said this exact same thing in John 14.10 when Philip said, Lord, show us the Father, and it's enough for us. And He said, Have I been so long time with you, Philip, and you have not known Me? Do you not know that I am in the Father and the Father is in Me? And if you've seen Me, you've seen the Father.

Now this statement, I am in the Father and the Father is in Me, is what is said here also. That is, the Father and the Son co-inhere. They inhere within one another.

They are intermixed inseparably. Like two substances put together in one container. Two liquids.

When you put them together, they co-inhere. They are in each other. And so Jesus, that's how the Father and I are.

Therefore, that's why they sought to seize Him again. So the last few verses real quickly here just say He decided to get out of their range. They were trying too frequently now to kill Him.

And it just wasn't the way He was going to go. He was going to die, but not that way. Stoning was not predicted.

Crucifixion was. Therefore, He could not allow Himself to die as just a mob action of the Jews. It had to be the Romans.

Only the Romans crucified people. In order to fulfill prophecy, He had to die that way. In fact, John himself makes that point later on.

When the Jews say to Pilate, it is not lawful for us to put a man to death. John says that it might be fulfilled what Jesus said when He predicted the way He would die. You see, Jesus predicted He would die of crucifixion.

And John points that out. And when the Jews came to Pilate and said, we cannot legally put a man to death. John says, you see, that was going to fulfill Jesus' prediction that He would die by crucifixion.

Because the Jews acknowledged that they had to have the Romans do it. And the Romans were the ones who crucified. So Jesus couldn't allow Himself to die by stoning, just by an angry mob of Jews.

It wasn't His hour and it wasn't His way to go. So He escaped them again. And it was getting hot in Jerusalem because these statements He was making kept accumulating.

And the anger of those who thought He was a blasphemer kept boiling up more and more. So He actually crossed the river and didn't come back to Jerusalem again until the Passion Week. He went across the Jordan.

The Pharisees could go there too, but they had no jurisdiction over there. Of course, they didn't really have jurisdiction in Jerusalem either. They weren't political leaders.

They were just religious teachers. But they had far more influence over the culture in Judea than they did in Perea, on the other side of the Jordan. So Jesus went away again beyond the Jordan to the place where John was baptizing at first.

And there He stayed. Then many came to Him and said, among themselves apparently, John performed no sign. But all the things that John spoke about this man were true.

And many believed in Him there. So John the Baptist was an interesting prophet. He came in the spirit and power of Elijah.

But unlike Elijah, he didn't do any miracles. He left that to Jesus to do. John didn't do any signs.

But his testimony was true. And that's the most important thing because that's what he was there to be, to be a witness. And the most that can be hoped for from a witness is that he tells the truth.

And so people, when they saw Jesus, they remembered what John had said and they say, you know, he was right about Jesus. John didn't really do any miracles to convince us that he knew what he was talking about. But we can see that he knew about what he was talking about because he spoke about this man and now we can see that that is right.

So this is actually the last we hear about John the Baptist. It's interesting that after a certain point in the book of John, the references to John the Baptist get briefer and briefer until the final one, just a mere sentence like this. It's almost illustrative of John's last recorded words in the gospel of John.

I must decrease, but he must increase. So he does decrease in the gospel. And this is the last time we hear about John.

He's long dead by this time. John was dead before this utterance was given, but it's the last remembrance of John that we read of in the gospel of John. And thus we come to the end of this chapter and we have before us next time the story of Lazarus.