

(22) At that time the Feast of Dedication took place at Jerusalem. It was winter, and Jesus was walking in the temple, in the colonnade of Solomon. So the Jews gathered around Him and said 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 bear witness about me, but you do not believe because you are not among My sheep. My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me. I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will 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 the Father’s hand. I and the Father are one.”

(31) The Jews picked up stones again to stone Him.

(32) Jesus answered them, “I have shown you many good works from the Father; for which of them are you going to stone Me?” The Jews answered Him, “It is not for a good work that we are going to stone You but for blasphemy, because You --- being a man --- make Yourself God.”

(34) Jesus answered them, “Is it not written in your Law, ‘I said, you are gods’? If He called them gods to whom the Word of God came --- and scripture cannot be broken --- do you say of Him whom the Father consecrated and sent into the world, ‘You are blaspheming,’ because I said, ‘I am the Son of God’? If I am not doing the works of My Father, then do not believe Me; but if I do them, even though you do not believe Me, believe the works, that you may know and understand that the Father is in Me and I am in the Father.”

(39) Again they sought to arrest Him, but He escaped from their hands. He went away again across the Jordan to the place where John had been baptizing at first, and there He remained. And many came to Him. And they said, “John did no sign, but everything John said about this man was true.” And many believed in Him there.

Think on these things:

- 1) What is the Feast of Dedication called today in modern times? Hint: it is a “winter” celebration for the Jews held on the 25th of the ninth Jewish month of Kislev (normally December).

* **Hannukah**

- 2) V.24 concludes with a statement echoed by many over the years: “If you are the Christ, tell us plainly!” (People today say that Jesus never claimed to be Christ, the Son of God, but that Christians have falsely made Him God, part of the Trinity.) Had Jesus made an understandable claim to be the Christ before? See what happened at Nazareth (Luke 4:16-21, 28-30) and earlier at the temple (John 8:52-59). Is He speaking clearly this day (John 10:33, 36)?

Nazareth? **First, in His Nazareth home synagogue He claimed Isaiah’s prophecy was about Him, and they tried to kill Him by pushing Him off a cliff near the city.**

The temple earlier? **By claiming He knew Abraham and was “I AM”, they tried to stone Him.**

This day? **“Because I said, ‘I am the Son of God.’” (v.36) “You, a man, make Yourself God.” (v.33)**

So, what’s your conclusion? Did Jesus make it clear to the Jews in His country that He claimed to be God, the Son (the Messiah/Christ) or was He coy and evasive (vs. 30-31)?

They fully understood His claims, and several times they tried to kill Him by stoning --- the penalty for blasphemy! Yes, Jesus made it abundantly clear that He is the Lord’s Anointed One.

- 3) Jesus said the crowd of people listening that day did not believe Him because they were, “not among My sheep” (v.26). What words of “security” does Jesus offer in vs. 27-29 to comfort His sheep? How do these words bring comfort to you?

“I know them, and they follow Me.” “I give them eternal life and they will never perish.” “No one can snatch them out of My hand” (or the Father’s hand, v.29).

Comfort me? **Personal answers will vary. We should all be grateful that no one can take us out of the caring hands of God. We know Him, and He knows us --- and protects/preserves us. (NOTE: This is also a proof text used in Calvinist theology. Arminian/Wesleyan theology would acknowledge God’s protective care, but retain the belief that people --- using their free will --- can choose to walk away from their faith at any time. We can’t be forced to quit, but we can walk away.)**

- 4) Besides words, what does Jesus say testifies about Him (vs. 25, 33, 38)? How does James build on this idea for followers of Jesus (James 2:14-18)?

What did Jesus say? **Jesus told the Jews to consider His miraculous works if they could not accept His words of testimony.**

What did James say? **Works are an expression of living what we believe, living by faith. The genuineness of faith is demonstrated by how we live.**

- 5) V.34 is a very strange verse that quotes v.6 from Ps. 82:1-8. This Psalm is accusatory, with God taking rulers to task for failing to deliver the weak and needy from injustice. Unjust leaders show ignorance; they “know nothing” (v.5). These rulers seem like gods, sons of the Most High --- but they suffer death like all men (v.6). How does Jesus use this verse to defend Himself (vs.34-36)?

If God refers to the princes (leaders) of Israel as ‘sons of God’ (Ps. 82:6) who received God’s Word, then the Jews are God’s sons. Therefore, no one should object that Jesus says He is the Son of God, the One God consecrated and sent into the world.

- 6) John the Baptist (vs. 40-42) is dead by this point in time of Jesus’ ministry, yet he is credited with leading even more people to faith in Jesus (though dead). What made him an effective witness? See John 1:26-34 and 3:27-36.

Though not a miracle worker, the Jews recognized that what John said about Jesus was the truth. John said he was unworthy of Jesus, that Jesus was the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world (Jn 1). John acknowledged that as Jesus increased (in prominence among the Jews), he (John) must decrease. The Father loves the Son (Jesus) and has given all things into His hands, and He (Jesus) gives the Spirit without limits. Eternal life is in the Son (Jn. 3).

* - The Feast of Dedication comes from extra-Biblical sources (i.e., from the Book of Maccabees in the Apocrypha, in December 164 B.C.). After an “abomination of desolation” event under Antiochus Epiphanes -- the sacrifice of a pig in the Temple -- Judas Maccabaeus led a revolt against the Seleucids (Greeks) of Syria that reestablished Jewish control of the land (until the Romans arrived). To cleanse the Temple after the abomination event, he lit the Menorah in the Holy Place with just enough oil to work one day. Miraculously, it lasted 8 days, sufficient time to produce more pure olive oil for Temple usage. This 8-day celebration of lights is known as “Hannukah” today.

People and situations I want to pray for this week: