

How Will You Respond to Jesus Christ?

John 10:22-42

Various sources claim that we make up to **35,000 decisions per day!**

Some studies show that we make hundreds of decisions around food alone each day. (Cornell)

- At first, I thought this was an exaggeration. But then I thought about all the little decisions you make every day, and I said, “okay, that’s probably about right.”
- **The legendary football coach, Nick Saban apparently eats the same breakfast and lunch everyday: two oatmeal cream pies for b’fast, and the same salad for lunch.** When asked why, he said because he doesn’t want to make any more decisions.
- **Steve Jobs wore the same attire everyday for this reason also.**

Of all the decisions you will make in a day, and all of the decisions you will make in life, there’s one decision that is more important than any other:

What will you do with Jesus Christ?

How will you respond to him? Reject him (31) or believe in him? (42).

The purpose of John’s gospel is that you would believe in Jesus and have life in his name.

Recall **John 20:31**

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.

We could cite this text every week in our study, but I bring it up this week because this dominant theme is so clearly present in this passage:

- **V. 24: Are you the Christ?** Then Jesus addresses it.
- **V. 33:** they make the charge of blasphemy, saying Jesus makes himself equal with God. Jesus then launches into a discussion about being **the Son of God.**
- **V. 42,** many **believe** in him.

The Person of Jesus dominates this passage.

As I looked at this passage closer, I recognized that not only is this dominant theme present in this passage, but some of the sub-themes that we’ve hit are also present.

So I thought it would be good just to list out each of these themes, and it will serve as a great “mid-term exam review.”

But this is not an academic exercise; this is truth that transforms your life now and forevermore! It’s vitally important truth. Here they are:

1. The hostility of the Jews.
2. The availability of evidence.

3. The identity of God's people.
4. The security of God's people.
5. The identity of Jesus.
6. The authority of Jesus over his death.
7. The necessity of belief.

This also seems to be an appropriate place to do a summary, as this is **Jesus' final public disclosure of himself to the Jews.**

- He will be in Bethany and then eventually back to Jerusalem for the Passion.
- And it ends in 10:40, where it all began, where John baptized him.
- Carson, "The final verses of ch. 10 close a giant *inclusio*: Jesus' public ministry begins and ends with the witness of the Baptist (1:19–10:42)."
- Chapters 11-12 serve as transitional sections between his public ministry and his passion (beginning in ch. 13).

1. The Hostility of the Jews (10:22-24, 31)

This theme is tied to the theme of darkness/light in John. They don't want the light. They hate the light.

A. The Setting for the Hostility: The Feast of Dedication (10:22-23)

22: You won't find The Feast of Dedication in the Old Testament.

- It arose during the inter-testamental period, and at the time of John's writing, it was a relatively new event.
- In 167 BC the Syrian Antiochus Epiphanes invaded Jerusalem and desecrated the temple, sacrificing a sow to Jupiter on the altar at the temple.
- Jews revolted and launched into guerrilla warfare.
- Eventually they grew strong enough to **overthrow the oppressor, and, under Judas Maccabaeus ('Judas the Hammer'). The first MC hammer to say stop hammer time!**
- They recaptured the temple and re-consecrated it to God on 25 Kislev (the month that coincides with December), in 164 bc.
- The people celebrated the rededication of the temple for eight days, and it was decreed that a similar eight-day Feast of Dedication should be held every year, beginning on 25 Kislev.
- We know as *Hanukkah*. Heard of that? (Adam Sandler wrote a song about it! Put on your Yamaha, here comes Hanakuh... tell your friend Veronica...)
- It was also called the **Feast of Lights, because of the lighting of lamps and candles in Jewish homes to celebrate the Feast.**
- During this feast, there were great Messianic dreams, including the desire for Messiah to come and overthrow Rome and their oppressors.

- God did send the deliverer, Jesus, but they rejected him.
- They wanted to stone him! They eventually crucified him.
- **He wasn't the Messiah everyone expected, and wanted, but He was the Messiah everyone needed.**

22c: It's **winter**; perhaps symbolic of the **cold spiritual condition of the Jews**.

- It was certainly an illustration if nothing else of their attitude toward Jesus.
- Ever been greeted coldly? That happened here.
- He came to his own, and his own did not receive him (Jn 1:11; Acts 5:12)

23: Jesus is walking in the temple.

- Here is their Messiah in these temple courts!
- But they respond in hostility to him...

B. The Act of Hostility (24)

- You can feel the hostility, as John says, "they gathered around him" like a group of bullies surrounding a boy at recess. It's literally, "**circle in on him**"
- The Gk word for "gather" is only used elsewhere at **Lk 21:20** to describe how Rome surrounded Jerusalem before its destruction.
- **We don't usually draw these pics of Jesus for our kids! "Hey kids, why don't you draw pictures of the Jewish leaders surrounding Jesus, wanting to stone him. Go ahead." ?!**
- I think it's appropriate for kids to have the pics of Jesus playing with kids because he loved children. **But Jesus did more than bless the children; he withstood his opponents boldly.**

Then they begin to question him (**24b-c**), which I'll note in a moment....

31: After Jesus answers them, they respond the same way they responded when he made the famous I Am statement in John 8:58 – they wanted to stone him.

- Blasphemy was to be punished by stoning (Lev 24:16), but not mob violence. There was to be a judicial process.
- That's outrageous to us.
- These are religious leaders attempting mob violence.

They are tragically blind to his identity. This is your Messiah!

The examples of this hostility in John's gospel abound:

- John 1:11 – 5:16; 5:18; 6:44; 7:1; 7:13; 7:30; 7:32; 7:44; 8:59
- 9:34 (blind man); 10:20

Why did the Jewish leaders make accusations, call him names, and threaten him?

- It was because **Jesus was actually threatening them.**
- He was coming into their territory, and claiming to be the Messiah, Savior, the fulfillment of everything.

- The Jewish leaders were not leading people to life, but to death.
- Jesus came as
 - The ultimate lamb of God (ch 1),
 - The ultimate bridegroom of the wedding (ch 2),
 - The ultimate temple (ch 2),
 - The ultimate substitute lifted up on the pole for the forgiveness of sinners (ch 3),
 - The Savior of the world, including Samaritans (ch 4),
 - The ultimate Sabbath rest (ch 5),
 - The True Manna from heaven (ch 6),
 - The giver of living water (ch. 7),
 - The ultimate light in a dark world, who opens eyes and leads us into the light (ch 8-9);
 - The ultimate Shepherd (ch. 10)
- He threatened everything, by being the fulfillment of everything.
- It was either respond ... (a) in **hostile rebellion**, or (b) in **humble repentance**.
- They chose the former.

2. The Availability of Evidence (10:24-26)

Another big theme in John is about why people should believe in Jesus' claims. He listed four of them in **chapter 5** – (1) the Father, (2) John the B, (3) his works, and (4) the Scriptures.

But we have the Jews questioning the availability of the evidence.

24: They want him to declare his **identity**, "**plainly**."

- It can be translated, "How long will you annoy us?"
- When Luther was on trial they asked him to recant on his writings.
 - He said, "**Which writings? I have written many things. Surely you're not indicating that everything I've written is heretical.**"
 - The interrogator got upset and said, Answer "**without horns.**" (R.C.)
 - **That is, tell us simply and directly, no more evasions or ambiguities.**
- That's what they're asking Jesus – "**Speak without horns. Tell us!**"
- In a sense, they're **blaming their unbelief on what they deem to be Jesus' lack of clarity.**
 - Like the person who says **God hasn't given enough "evidence" to believe.**
 - Some don't believe but chalk it up to mere **semantics.**
 - **Most unbelieving American's has actually thought about the claims of Jesus. They have not sat down with a gospel, and a good commentary, and a pencil and paper and actually considered what he says.**
 - That's a tragedy.

- But the problem has **not** been with the evidence!
- It has been a problem of the **heart**.
- They are **not** interested in worshipping him here.
- They are looking for **grounds to attack him**.
- Jesus was careful to avoid this **loaded** word, "**Messiah**" among the Jews, as so many various Messianic expectations were floating around.
- He already *plainly* called himself "the Good Shepherd," **among other things**, and they **didn't believe**. (The Good Shepherd, was an image of King, Ruler).
- Jesus knows they won't believe him now.

25: In saying, "**I did tell you**," he **doesn't** mean an explicit statement about being Messiah.

- If he had told them this, they **would never have grasped a suffering Messiah**.
- They would not have believed a **Messiah that wasn't political**.
- With that said, **his words and his works were enough to make the point; so in a sense, his words and works were as if he told them already**.
- The most immediate referent to "works" was **the healing of the blind man**.
 - What more do you need?
 - Giving sight to the blind was **a clear sign of the Messiah!**
- Consider his previous miracles, and all that he has said about himself!
- What more do you want?
- **The Story of Rich Man and Lazarus (Luke 16:31)**. You have enough.

26: Why don't they believe him?

- It's simple: **they are not his sheep**.
- There's a strong teaching on God's sovereignty and grace in this passage.
- Faith is a gift from God.
- This leads Jesus into a discussion about who is people really are...

3. The Identity of God's People (10:27)

The three images of God's people so far have been: "children of God" (cf 1:12; 11:52), his "disciples" (1:11; 8:31) and his "sheep." (10)

That's our identity. We are his kids! We are his disciples! We are his sheep!

10:27: This verse is so glorious because it's so simple.

- John can be incredibly deep, and then he can make a statement this simple.
- **In my opening sermon in John I quoted the N African church father, Augustine, who once said of the gospel of John, that it's "shallow enough for a child not to drown in, yet deep enough for an elephant to swim in."**

Three **truths** about Jesus' sheep:

- They **hear** his voice (**calling**)
- He **knows** them (**relationship**)
- They **follow** him (**sanctification**)

1. **Calling. God's people (his sheep/his children) are those who hear his voice.**

- It begins with this initial call to salvation.
- **"Whoever is of God, hears the words of God" (8:47)**
- The gospel comes to us in power (1 Thess 1:5)
- **Spurgeon said it's easy to train a tiger to be a vegetarian than convincing an unregenerate person of the gospel.**
- **We need divine illumination, and the Spirit's drawing us.**
- We now reject the voices of **strangers** (last week's sermon).

2. **Relationship. God's people (his sheep/his children) know him**

- We have a relationship with our shepherd (10:14)
- There's no greater privilege.
- **"Hey Rod, It's M.J."** – that's cool, but that's nothing.
- **Too many people are seeking for people to know their name.**
- **If Jesus knows your name, you got everything you need.**
- **But if you aren't content with Jesus knowing your name, you'll never be content with hundreds of people knowing your name!**
- Galatians 4:8 – a two-way relationship.

3. **Sanctification. God's people (his sheep/his children) follow him.**

- This is not easy-believism. This is a lifelong disciple.

How do we follow him?

- We follow him by following his word!
 - That theme has been huge in John.
 - 5:38 – his word is not abiding in you, the Scriptures that point to him (39, 46)
 - 6:68 – he has the words of life
 - 8:31; 8:52
 - John 17 – **"sanctify them in the truth, your word is truth"**
- This is very important to note in today's world **where people don't see the word of God as sufficient.**
- **"Hey what do you teach in seminary? I tell guys to use the Bible and talk about Jesus!" Really? You have to say that? Yes. Have you visited any churches lately!**
- **People prioritize experience and mysticism.**
- **They don't really believe the Bible is enough.**
- **How many people go around saying, "God told me" but have no biblical basis for their decision.**
- We need to tell people, **"You want to hear God speak?" Open the Bible!**

- “Want to hear him speak audibly?” **Read it outloud!**
 - We don’t need a seven year old kid to tell us that heaven is for real, we have the Bible.
 - One Pastor in NC – spends half the sermon exegeting his dreams
 - One guy thought he should move to Israel in 2012... Genesis 12, page 20. Mine is on page 8, your too late!
 - A 82 year old widow was about to run off with a young guy, and then decided it wasn’t the Lord’s wil. Why? She was eating breakfast, and said that as she was looking at her cantaloupe, the Lord said to her “Can’t Elope.”
 - That kind of thing happens all the time!
 - A brother here was telling me of a gal who said there was a “J” in the clouds and she took that she should marry the guy with the letter “J” as first name.
 - Seriously people!
 - This kind of mystical individualism undermines the importance and sufficiency of Scripture.
- My friends, we must prioritize the Bible, and believe it’s sufficient.
- **We follow Jesus by following His Word.**
- Immerse yourself in it!
- **Don’t let Netflix and social media prevent you from being a voracious Bible reader!**

4. The Security of God’s People (10:28-30)

Throughout John, we’ve seen a strong note of grace.
John 6 was filled with references... (6:37, 39)

28: Three truths about grace:

#1: Jesus gives his sheep eternal life.

- It’s not earned; it’s received.
- “Eternal life” is more about quality of life, than quantity of life.”
- It’s not just that when you die you go to heaven; it’s also when you believe, heaven comes to you! He gives abundant life.
- It’s not just about an endless amount of days, but a particular kind of life for endless amount of days that starts now.
- Multiple references to new life, new birth (Jn 3; 5:24)

#2: They shall never perish.

- They can’t since they have eternal life.
- Here the emphasis is on an endless amount of days.

#3: No one can snatch them out of Jesus’ hand.

- No thief, no enemy, no wolf, not even the devil, nothing can take us out of the grip of grace!
- It’s not that we won’t have trouble in life.
- But that we will be saved no matter what may come against us. (Rom 8:31)
- Our ultimate security rests not on our power, but the Good Shepherd’s power.

- We are secure in Him!
 - We lose stuff.
 - People may pick pocket us. We take extreme measures to not lose valuable things. But Jesus said... **there's nothing worse than the feeling of losing your wallet or passport!**
 - John 6:39 (CSB): "I should lose none of those he has given me."
 - **About a week ago, I showed by ability to lose something valuable... it's in 12b**
 - Jesus doesn't leave us in the seat back.
 - It's not our grip of him but his grip of us.
- No one can snatch us from Jesus' hands – His hands were pierced so that we may have this salvation and this security. We are in his wounded, now glorified hands.
- As someone said, **"If you could lose your salvation, you would."**
- Salvation is a gift that is not earned; security is also a gift.
- "Once saved always saved?" I prefer **"When saved always saved."**
- **"If you have it, you will never lose it; if you lose it, you never had it."** (R.C.)
- True faith is a persevering, fruit-bearing faith, and that person is secure.
- True faith is a "following faith" – it's habitual and lifelong.

29: Like everything else Jesus does, he is at work with the Father.

- He is always doing the Father's will.
- So here, he adds that we are not only in the Son's hand, but we're in the Father's hand, and **no one is greater than He. You are doubly secure!**
- Verse 28 – no one **can** snatch you.
- Verse 29 – No one is **able** to snatch you.
- You are in **God's omnipotent hand!**
No one can steal from God.
- **He's not like a running back that fumbles! He won't let go of you.**
- You have nothing to fear, for your all-powerful Shepherd has you!
- "Your life is hidden with Christ in God" (Col 3:3)
- We are secure!

30: After saying that the Son and Father are at work in securing the sheep, Jesus then makes the statement, "I and the Father am **one**."

- Jesus and his Father are **not one person (Modalism)**; we've already addressed the distinction between Jesus and the Father in **1:1b**.
- What Jesus means is that he and the Father are perfectly **one in action**, in what they do. **Heresies abound when people don't understand this.**
- The context is plain enough, and the Greek makes it even clearer.
- Jesus is talking about their activity, what they do, **particularly in verses 28-29 their action of preserving the sheep.**

So they asked Jesus if he was the Messiah, and he gave them more than they wanted to know!

5. The Identity of Jesus (10:31-38)

The questions of his identity have involved discussions about him being Messiah (cf, 1:41; 10:24) and the Son of God (Jn 5:19).

Most could not get their minds around a suffering Messiah.

32: This time Jesus doesn't withdraw. Instead he offers a response.

- His statement implies that he is at work with the Father.
- So why do they want to **stone someone who has been doing the work of God?**

33: But they would not be convinced.

- They always found a way to explain away his words/works.
- They accuse him of blasphemy.
- Notice they say, "You make yourself God."
- No, He is. And He is standing in front of you.

That's the issues: Is he? It still is.

But what does Jesus say? (Read vs. 34-36)

34-36: Jesus appeals to the entire Old Testament with the phrase, "Law."

Jesus turns the charge of blasphemy on them by quoting Ps 82:6, where God says to the judges of Israel **"I said you are gods."**

- That is, "gods" in the sense that **they have been given the divine charge to execute a God-given office.** (Moo)

His point is simple; it's the **lesser to the greater.**

If the term "gods" may be occasionally applied to men who exercise a divine mission, how much more can it be used of Jesus, the Sent One, the Holy One, who is executing the ultimate mission.

- **In other words, there was historic precedent to call someone a "son of God" but no one accused these judges of blaspheme!**
- **And these were mere mortals!** (as the Psalm says in 82:7, men like you die)
- **So why stone the One who is the divine Son of God, doing the works of the Father?**

Jesus is the Son of God *par excellence*.

- So he says, "What's your problem?"

The Scripture **"cannot be broken,"** was a statement that ties the Old Testament to Jesus, the Son of God.

- His statement shows the unity of the Bible.
- For us, this is a powerful statement about the trustworthiness of Scripture.

- 36:** Jesus closes the knot of his argument by appealing **to his own uniqueness.**
- He is **the consecrated/holy/sanctified One that the Father sent into the world.**
 - Remember **the Festival was about desecration and holiness, and here is the Holy One Himself.**
 - If he is the holy one, sent from Heaven, then how can he be guilty of **blasphemy?**

37-38: He appeals again to his works.

But the problem wasn't with Jesus giving sufficient proofs, either from his words, works, or by appealing to Scripture.

- The problem was with their failure to recognize him as the Son of God.
- It was a **heart problem.**

6. The Authority of Jesus Over His Death (10:39)

39: Once again, they refuse to believe. They seek to arrest him (perhaps to go stone him) but he escapes again, because we know, his hour had not yet come.

This is yet another reference to Jesus' authority over his death.

Time and time again, they try to arrest him but can't!

- **7:30; 7:44; 8:20; 8:59; 10:18**
- **10:39**
- **13:1**
- **19:10-11**

¹⁰ So Pilate said to him, "You will not speak to me? Do you not know that I have authority to release you and authority to crucify you?" ¹¹ Jesus answered him, "You would have no authority over me at all unless it had been given you from above..."

His hour would come (19:17-18).

He would fulfill this divine mission.

The Lamb of God slain for sinners.

7. The Necessity of Belief (10:40-42)

We may make 35,000 decisions per day, but this is the most important one.

We've seen it throughout John (**1:12; 3:16; 3:36; 5:24; 6:40; 8:30; 9:38**)

40: As a result of the hostility, Jesus retreats to the other side of the Jordan.

- Jesus leaves Jerusalem **for the purpose of safety.**
- **He will return later, when his time has come, to lay down his life.**
- His retreat across the Jordan also gives us a **final opportunity to consider John the Baptist's witness.**

41: But people seek him out there too, particularly those who had been impacted by John the Baptists' ministry.

- This is the last note of John the Baptist in the gospel.
- His influence lived on.
- He did no miracles; he simply pointed people to Jesus.
- That's' a life well lived.
- **What an epitaph: "All that John said of this man is true"**

42: Many came to believe on the Son of God and Messiah.

John's testimony brought people to check out Jesus, much the way the Samaritan lady's witness brought people to Jesus.

- They are great model witnesses for us.
- These folks came to see for themselves, and they believed. They were his sheep.
- They believed **"there"** as they beheld the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world.
- **They believed not in the Holy city of Jerusalem, but "there" in the desert, where people had to travel through much hardship to get to him!**
- **The gospel is for the whole world!**

And now the call is for (1) you to believe, and (2) be his witness, like John.

- That's our calling. Do you believe?
- Are you bearing witness?
- Like John, let's just go around saying true things about Jesus and urging people to believe.