

**v.9:1-2** *And as [Jesus] passed by, he saw a man which was blind from [his] birth. And his disciples asked him, saying, Master, who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind?*

Jesus and the apostles come upon a man who was known to have been born blind. This prompts what amounts to a theological question from the apostles, namely, "why would someone be born with such an affliction?" They even offer two possible answers. Could this man have somehow been guilty of a sin that caused this, or was it a sin committed by his parents?

- a) We are not told when or where this incident took place. Some believe that it was as Jesus was passing through the crowd to escape those who wanted to stone Him. (v. 8:59) For obvious reasons this is highly unlikely. The incident probably took place a few days later and at the temple gate. This is where those so afflicted gathered to beg from the temple goers. We are also told that it was the Sabbath.
- b) It is true that some ailments and hardships are the result of sin. In fact, in its broadest sense, all affliction and hardship are a result of sin. (Rom. 5:12) It is taught in both the Old and New Testaments that there are consequences to sin. Most of the time these consequences are foregone by the mercy of God, sometimes they are delayed and at other times come down immediately upon the sinner. Sometimes it is the consequence of the sins of one's parents that is experienced (Ex. 20:5) or even the sins of others.
- c) As usual the Jews had taken these facts to the extreme. They tried to trace every tragedy and misfortune to a particular sin. In the story of Job his friends sat around trying to figure out what sin had caused his misfortune. The Rabbis, in their writings, concluded that Esau tried to kill Jacob in the womb and was guilty of sin. (Gen. 25:22-26) This thinking was very prevalent in the time of Jesus and so prompted the question.

**v.9:3-5** *Jesus answered, Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents: but that the works of God should be made manifest in him. I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work. As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.*

The Jews asked Jesus questions in order to mock Him or to entrap Him, and Jesus responded to them accordingly. Here the apostles ask Him an honest question, truly wanting to understand, and Jesus is apt to teach them. He corrects their reasoning telling them that the sins of this man nor his parents were directly responsible for his condition. (Luke 13:2-5)

- a) In the divine providence of God this man was born blind. This blindness would now be used to work a greater good. Through this man the power, glory and mercy of God would be seen or be made known.
- b) Jesus knows that it is a part of the divine plan for this individual to be healed of his blindness. Healing this man was a work of the Father that He was commissioned and sent to perform. Once again a divine timetable is implied. He must finish the work of the Father while He is in the world. (v. 4:34) He did not stumble upon the man by chance.
- c) Jesus again alludes to His death in a comparison of daylight to darkness. The day represents His life, while the darkness represents His death. The idea is that while He was alive on the earth it was His time to manifest the attributes of God in the world. He was the light of God shining in

- d) *the earth in all of its brilliance. Just as the sun surrenders to the night, so would Jesus soon give up His life, and the work would be finished. (v. 7:33-34)*

*Author's note:*

*We also have our allotted time on this earth, that is, our daylight, when we too are to walk in the works of our Father. We are to be diligent in our work because our night also comes. (Eccl. 9:10) Through the Holy Spirit it is we who are now the light of God in the world. It is our works that are to glorify God. (Matt. 5:14-16)*

**v.9:6-7** *When he had thus spoken, he spat on the ground, and made clay of the spittle, and he anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay, And said unto him, Go, wash in the pool of Siloam, (which is by interpretation, Sent.) He went his way therefore, and washed, and came seeing.*

*Spitting on the ground, Jesus made clay from the dust and His saliva, and put it on the man's eyes. Then He commanded the man to go and wash in the pool of Siloam. The man obeys the instructions of Jesus and receives his sight. It is again a true miracle that cannot be questioned (even though they will try). A man who was born blind is given sight.*

- a) *Why Jesus healed this man in this particular manner we do not know. The account does not attach any symbolic meaning to His saliva or the mud that He fashioned. If anything it was probably to test the man's obedience. He was given what appears to be an arbitrary command and following it demonstrated faith in the words of Jesus. Another possibility is that it set the stage for another confrontation with Pharisees. To fashion clay on the Sabbath was against rabbinical law. (v. 14)*
- b) *The miracle seems to have some symbolism attached to it although it is not explicitly stated. Right before the miracle Jesus portrays himself as the light of the world. He then performed the physical miracle to demonstrate this spiritual truth. Later, as we will see, Jesus will open the man's "spiritual eyes" to the light of truth.*
- c) *The pool of Siloam was formed from the spring that flowed from under the temple mount. This is where the water was taken from during the ceremony performed on the Feast of the Tabernacles. This is when Jesus cried out for the people to come to Him and drink. (v. 7:37) This water was symbolic of spiritual blessings. John also points out that Siloam means 'sent.' Throughout this gospel Jesus is presented as the One sent by the Father. John merely mentions these facts without telling of the connection, if any.*

**v.9: 8-15** *The neighbours therefore, and they which before had seen him that he was blind, said, Is not this he that sat and begged? Some said, This is he: others [said], He is like him: [but] he said, I am [he]. Therefore said they unto him, How were thine eyes opened? He answered and said, A man that is called Jesus made clay, and anointed mine eyes, and said unto me, Go to the pool of Siloam, and wash: and I went and washed, and I received sight. Then said they unto him, Where is he? He said, I know not. They brought to the Pharisees him that aforetime was blind. And it was the sabbath day when Jesus made the clay, and opened his eyes. Then again the Pharisees also asked him how he had received his sight. He said unto them, He put clay upon mine eyes, and I washed, and do see.*

*The man returns able to see for the first time. His appearance and mannerisms are obviously different*

and he begins to attract attention. Being blind from birth, he was probably a well-known beggar. The people begin to question if what they now see is possible. The question "is this not he" demands a positive answer and is asked to express surprise.

- a) Most confirmed that it was indeed the blind man, but some refused to believe it was possible. They insisted it was not the man, but that he merely bore a striking resemblance to him. The formerly blind man himself puts to rest any doubt by verifying that he was the man.
- b) The people were curious as to how this was possible and the man relates the story. They inquire where Jesus is, but the man does not know. They then take him to show the religious leaders. The man then relates the story to them.

**v.9:16-23** *Therefore said some of the Pharisees, This man is not of God, because he keepeth not the sabbath day. Others said, How can a man that is a sinner do such miracles? And there was a division among them. They say unto the blind man again, What sayest thou of him, that he hath opened thine eyes? He said, He is a prophet. But the Jews did not believe concerning him, that he had been blind, and received his sight, until they called the parents of him that had received his sight. And they asked them, saying, Is this your son, who ye say was born blind? how then doth he now see? His parents answered them and said, We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind: But by what means he now seeth, we know not; or who hath opened his eyes, we know not: he is of age; ask him: he shall speak for himself. These [words] spake his parents, because they feared the Jews: for the Jews had agreed already, that if any man did confess that he was Christ, he should be put out of the synagogue. Therefore said his parents, He is of age; ask him.*

The Pharisees had forbidden the people to speak openly of Jesus. It was also made clear to the people that anyone who would profess Jesus to be the Messiah would be put to out of the synagogue. Confusion exists among the people concerning Jesus so the only thing that they can do is to bring the miracles to the Pharisees' attention. In doing so they are basically saying, "You forbid us to speak of this man or even suggest that He is the Messiah, yet look at what He has done!"

- a) This particular miracle even caused a division among the leaders. This was an embarrassment to the Pharisees and a small victory for the so-called "riff-raff." (v. 7:49) One opinion totally overlooked the miracle and focused on the fact that it was performed on the Sabbath. This was the legalistic view based on a gross misinterpretation of the scriptures and on their own rabbinical laws that made the true law of God of no effect.
- b) The other group among them could not overlook the miracle. Their reasoning was that a sinner could not perform a miracle such as this. By putting it in the form of a question they do not directly oppose the other group or deny that Jesus is a sinner, but merely suggest that maybe there is more to this. Maybe the case is not so clear-cut concerning Jesus. Before they are willing to act they want some questions answered.
- c) Jesus had previously broken their Sabbath laws by healing. He twice had successfully defended His actions concerning the matter. Jesus appealed to divine authority. He stated that in healing He did the work of God. He was divinely commissioned to heal, even on the Sabbath. (v. 5:15-18) Questioned for the same offence by another group He pointed out their hypocrisy in the accusation and so proved that His actions were justified by their own laws. (v. 7:21-24)

- d) *Being divided, they could not confront Jesus so they attempt to discredit the miracle. If they can prove, or at least raise significant doubt that the miracle occurred, then they would again be unified in their opinions of Jesus.*
- e) *They first ask the man that was healed what he believes concerning Jesus who had supposedly healed him. He immediately proclaims that Jesus is a prophet, which meant that surely He was from God. The Jews, not believing that the man had been blind in the first place, send for the man's parents in order to interrogate them concerning the condition of their son.*
- f) *The parents are terrified of the Pharisees who they believed held their spiritual well being in their hands, and wisely stick to the facts. They verify that it is their son and that he was born blind. As for his present condition, they did not know and were unwilling to voice an opinion.*

**v.9:24-26** *Then again called they the man that was blind, and said unto him, Give God the praise: we know that this man is a sinner. He answered and said, Whether he be a sinner [or no], I know not: one thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see. Then said they to him again, What did he to thee? how opened he thine eyes?*

*The result of all of their efforts to discredit the miracle had failed. The man was telling the truth. In desperation, they call the man before them once again and simply ask him to confess before God. They explain to the man that they know that Jesus is a sinner and therefore could not have done what he claimed. Surely there is another explanation and they ask him to come clean. "Give God the praise" was a form of administering an oath. It was a confession before God admitting guilt. (Joshua 7:19)*

- a) *The man also sticks to the facts. He does not venture a guess as to the moral character of Jesus at this time. What he does know is that he can now see. Out of desperation, possibly hoping to find some scientific explanation, or at least a contradiction in his story, they ask the man for the third time to tell them exactly what had happened.*

**v.9:27-34** *He answered them, I have told you already, and ye did not hear: wherefore would ye hear [it] again? will ye also be his disciples? Then they reviled him, and said, Thou art his disciple; but we are Moses' disciples. We know that God spake unto Moses: [as for] this [fellow], we know not from whence he is. The man answered and said unto them, Why herein is a marvellous thing, that ye know not from whence he is, and [yet] he hath opened mine eyes. Now we know that God heareth not sinners: but if any man be a worshipper of God, and doeth his will, him he heareth. Since the world began was it not heard that any man opened the eyes of one that was born blind. If this man were not of God, he could do nothing. They answered and said unto him, Thou wast altogether born in sins, and dost thou teach us? And they cast him out.*

*Throughout his life this man had been looked upon by the leaders as lower than the common people. He was viewed as a sinner and the son of sinners. The leaders would not help him because his handicap pointed to his sin. This is probably the first time a Pharisee had ever talked to him. Now they are trying to get him to deny the truth to get themselves off the hook. Possibly for these reasons a boldness comes over him and he takes the offensive.*

- a) *The man pokes fun at their predicament. He reminds them that he had already told them twice what had happened but they did not want to listen. In a sarcastic comment he suggests that since all of their efforts to discredit him and the miracle have failed, maybe the only thing left for them*

to do is to themselves become followers of Jesus. Is this perhaps why they want to hear the story again? Maybe they are finally ready to listen?

- b) *The Pharisees become indignant with the man, they label him as being a disciple of Jesus and boast that they are disciples of Moses. Being pre-occupied with the law, and in the legalistic society they had created, they desired to be linked to Moses, the giver of the law. Their reasoning is that they knew Moses through the scriptures and their traditions. They knew that he derived his authority from God. In other words, Moses was the proven commodity. You can't go wrong being a disciple of Moses.*
- c) *As for Jesus, they did not know where He got His authority, who was behind His teachings, or what was the source of His supposed power. This was not a contradiction to what they had stated previously concerning His origin. (v. 7:27) There the topic was His parentage, while here the statement refers to His authority or credibility in comparison to that of Moses.*
- d) *The man proceeds to give the Pharisees a theology lesson. He tells them that there is no record anywhere of a miracle being done such as he had experienced. Neither Moses nor the prophets ever gave sight to a man that was blind from birth. That God does hear sinners in regard to such miracles, even some of the Pharisees admitted. (v. 16) So if God was not with Jesus, He could never have performed the miracle. The man starts his discourse in a chiding fashion. He basically says, "You guys must really be brilliant, not being able to figure out where this guy gets His authority and who is behind it. To me it's a no-brainer." To hear the Pharisees say "they didn't know" was in itself an astonishing thing.*
- e) *In response, they remind him that he is a sinner, a man born in sin as evidenced by his former condition. They were Pharisees. He was a beggar. Would he dare to instruct them on the things of God? They exercise their authority and throw him out of the synagogue.*

***v.9:35-38 Jesus heard that they had cast him out; and when he had found him, he said unto him, Dost thou believe on the Son of God? He answered and said, Who is he, Lord, that I might believe on him? And Jesus said unto him, Thou hast both seen him, and it is he that talketh with thee. And he said, Lord, I believe. And he worshipped him.***

*Being thrown out of the synagogue was synonymous with excommunication. The man was looked upon as being spiritually cut off from God and the people. Jesus upon hearing of his situation finds the man and addresses him. His probable intention is to comfort the man by introducing him to the new system of worship that would replace the old. This man was not spiritually doomed but on the contrary would be given everlasting life. (v. 421-24)*

- a) *Up to this point the man had not yet seen Jesus. It is unclear when exactly he knew that the man that was now talking to him also healed him. The man had previously told the Pharisees that Jesus was a prophet and worked the works of God. He refused to accept their conclusion that Jesus was a sinner. Jesus now asks him if he believes in the Son of God, or in other words, the Messiah.*
- b) *At this point the man probably realizes that this is Jesus who had healed him. He probably thinks that as a prophet of God Jesus can introduce him to the Messiah. Jesus opens the man's "spiritual eyes" telling the man that he is now looking at and speaking to the Messiah.*

- c) *The man expresses his belief and renders worship to Jesus. The word used always indicates divine worship. The man probably fell on his knees and worshipped Jesus as God. Unlike some of the apostles, who when this happened to them immediately protested against such an act, Jesus accepts the man's worship.*

**v.9:39-41** *And Jesus said, For judgment I am come into this world, that they which see not might see; and that they which see might be made blind. And [some] of the Pharisees which were with him heard these words, and said unto him, Are we blind also? Jesus said unto them, If ye were blind, ye should have no sin: but now ye say, We see; therefore your sin remaineth.*

*The coming of Jesus into the world pronounced judgment on the Jewish religion. Using the analogy of Jesus, the Jews and especially the leadership, claimed that they could "see." They were the children of Abraham and worshipped the One True God whom they called Father. By their supposed sight they judged Jesus to be an imposter.*

- a) *Jesus tells them that as long as they claim to see they remain in judgment. In order for Him to give them true sight they must first become blind. Sight could be compared to their self-righteousness that they needed to lose in order to truly see. This analogy is similar to that of being born again. Nicodemus needed to entirely change his way of thinking. He needed to start over. He needed to become blind.*
- b) *Jesus could not have given the man physical sight unless he was physically blind. The man was thrown out of the synagogue and cut off from his religion. In other words, he was now spiritually blind. In revealing himself to this man, Jesus gave him spiritual sight. Only the blind have a desire to see.*

*[In coming to Christ the apostle Paul had to throw out, as so much garbage, the things that he had held as spiritually important. Although the analogy is not specifically pointed out in the scriptures it is interesting to note that Paul was physically blinded and that his blindness paralleled his period of spiritual blindness. (Acts 9:17-18)]*

- c) *So the blind probably represents the common people who were somewhat confused in their religion as they observed the hypocrisy of their leaders but were bound to blindly follow them. This beggar was representative of this group. Jesus came to give the common people sight and direction. On the other hand, the leaders who claimed to see, were shown to be mistaken by the teachings of Jesus. In a broader sense this could also refer to the Jews and gentiles. The gentiles being the blind and the Jew claiming to have sight.*
- d) *As for the specific Pharisees mentioned, it is not clear whether they were with Jesus or the man. Was their question one of sarcasm or of inquiry? Were they sympathetic to the man or hostile? Some of them were beginning to change their opinion of Jesus in light of the miracle.*

**10:1-10** *Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber. But he that entereth in by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. To him the porter openeth; and the sheep hear his voice: and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out. And when he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him: for they know his voice. And a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him: for they know not the voice of strangers. This parable spake Jesus unto them: but they understood not what things they were which he spake unto them. Then said Jesus unto them again, Verily, verily, I say unto you, I am the door of the sheep. All that ever came before me are thieves and robbers: but the sheep did not hear them. I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture. The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have [it] more abundantly.*

*It appears that the following discourse is a continuation of chapter 9. It is given before the man who had been given his sight, the Pharisees who were present, and the crowd that by now had probably begun to gather. It is given in the form of a parable (the only one in the gospel of John) and its main idea is a contrast between true shepherds and evil shepherds or more specifically between Jesus and the Pharisees.*

- a) *Jesus presents the parable and when He perceives that the people do not understand He does not really explain it but expands on what He had said using the same analogies. The Old Testament scriptures made frequent use of this analogy. God as well as leaders are pictured as shepherds, while the people are individual sheep that form the flock of Israel. (Ps. 79:13, 80:1; Ezek 34:15; Isaiah. 40:11) The fact that they had no understanding showed their ignorance of the scriptures.*

*[The sheepfold was a walled enclosure that served as a place of safety for the sheep, usually at night. In the analogy, Jesus is both the shepherd and also the door to the sheepfold. The sheep are the people of Israel while the Pharisees are described as strangers, thieves and robbers.]*

- b) *As the door, Jesus is the only legitimate entrance to the sheepfold. As the shepherd, the sheep rightfully belong to Him. The Pharisees had gained access to the sheep but not in a legitimate fashion. They would not enter in through Jesus but had "climbed the walls" of the sheepfold, so to speak.*
- c) *The Jewish leaders had stolen the sheep by intimidation. (v. 9:22) They had become strangers to the flock by forsaking the ways of the fathers and becoming children of the devil. (v. 8:44) They robbed and destroyed the sheep. (Matt. 23:14-15) The prophets spoke out against these supposed shepherds of Israel and predicted the coming of the True Shepherd. (Jer. 23:1-5; Ezek. 34) Jesus had to come to put an end to the ways of those who had come before Him.*
- d) *The true sheep had never put their faith in these strangers. They knew of their hypocrisy and fled from the ways of their leaders at every opportunity. The popularity of John the Baptist and now Jesus attested to this. In contrast, Jesus is the True Shepherd. He has a personal and caring relationship with His sheep. He calls them by name and they in turn follow Him. (v. 6:44) He ever goes before His sheep.*
- e) *Jesus adds the idea of being the door of the sheepfold. Those that enter in through Him will be saved. The sheepfold only had one entrance. Jesus represents the only way of salvation. Being saved is synonymous with having life and eternal life. This is why He came.*

- f) His sheep will have access to the safety of the fold and also be provided for and nourished. This is the idea of going in and out and finding pasture. They will have an abundant life under the care of their Shepherd. It is clear that the motive of the Shepherd is the welfare of the sheep, while the motive of the thief is for himself.

*Author's note:*

Verses seven through ten are not a direct explanation of the parable given in versus one through five. However, by identifying some of the symbols the parable can now more readily be understood by the people. The important point is that Jesus is the door of the sheepfold as well as the door to the sheep, that is, all true sheep as well as any true shepherd, must come through Him. As the door, He is the focal point and the only way. The idea of Jesus as the door has been stressed, now the idea of Jesus as the shepherd will be explained.

**10:11-13 I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep. But he that is an hireling, and not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, seeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep, and fleeth: and the wolf catcheth them, and scattereth the sheep. The hireling fleeth, because he is an hireling, and careth not for the sheep.**

Jesus continues the analogy, portraying himself as the shepherd who has an interest in His sheep. He again compares himself in this role as shepherd to the Pharisees whom He labels as hired help. The main idea is that the shepherd who has a stake in the flock is far superior to a mere hireling.

- a) In the original language the word "good" is stressed. It means excellent. The statement also implies that He is the only one with this excellent character. He is the good shepherd.
- b) The unique character of Jesus as the good shepherd is seen in that He lays down His life for the benefit of the sheep. He does not simply risk His life, but actually lays it down. It is a planned act for the sheep.
- c) The word translated "life" also has a much deeper meaning in the original language. It refers to the entire self or person and not merely the physical life. Hendrickson puts it; "pours out His soul." Jesus as the good shepherd gives all that He has for the sheep.
- d) It must also be noted that He gives His life for His sheep, that is, those who hear His voice, recognize it, and follow Him. (vs. 3-4)
- e) The Pharisees or Jewish leaders were earlier portrayed as thieves and robbers. In this comparison they are represented as hired help. As hirelings, they had no real love for the sheep. They were much more concerned about their own welfare. This has been pointed out repeatedly in this gospel. The Pharisees viewed the people as ignorant riff-raff. (v. 7:49) They demonstrated absolutely no feeling or compassion for the lame man that Jesus healed, the blind man who received his sight or the woman taken in adultery. Instead they merely used these people to try to get Jesus and further their own agenda.
- f) The wolf can represent Satan, false prophets or anything that might come against or threaten the well-being of the sheep. The idea is that they do not care for the sheep and would abandon them at any time when it might serve their purpose. The point is that under Jesus the flock is gathered and safe, while under the hireling they are vulnerable and apt to be scattered.

**10:14-15** *I am the good shepherd, and know my [sheep], and am known of mine. As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father: and I lay down my life for the sheep.*

Jesus expands upon verse 11 where He first stated that He is the good shepherd. There, He stated that the good shepherd gives His life for the sheep. Here, He emphatically says that it is He, the good shepherd, who will lay down His life for the sheep.

- a) When Jesus says that He knows His sheep, He means that He understands them or has a personal knowledge of each of them. Knowing their wants, needs and desires, He takes a keen interest in them. He regards them with great affection or love. (v. 3; Heb. 4:15; Isaiah 40:11)
- b) In return His sheep know Him. They know of His gentleness and love. They know Him as the One who can meet their need and give them security. They love Him as their shepherd.
- c) The relationship between the good shepherd and the sheep, or between Jesus and the believer, is patterned after the relationship that exists between Jesus and the Father. It is an intimate relationship of knowledge and trust that produces a oneness. The believer becomes a partaker of the divine nature as the Holy Spirit dwells within him. (vs. 6:56-57, 17:21-23)
- d) The proof of this bond or link between Jesus and His sheep is that He will lay down His life in their behalf or for their benefit. This thought will also soon be expanded upon.

**10:16** *And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, [and] one shepherd.*

The other fold that Jesus speaks of is the gentile world. He had sheep in this fold whom He would call out. When this was accomplished His sheep would form one flock, which He would lead as their shepherd.

- a) Jesus here refers to the demise of the Jewish system and the coming era of the church. (Heb. 8:13) Those called from among the Jews and gentiles would come together to form one flock, which is His body or church. (Ezek. 34:23-24)
- b) He knew that there were those among the gentiles who would believe. These He must bring. This was much more than foresight on the part of Jesus, but had been established thousands of years earlier in the promises and covenants. (Gen. 22:18) In fact, it had been established before the foundation of the world in the plan and purpose of God. (Eph. 1:4)
- c) Notice the definitive nature of the phrases of this verse. "Other sheep I have." "They also must I bring." "They shall hear my voice." "They shall be one fold." There is nothing left to chance. Jesus is fulfilling the will of the Godhead. Nothing could come against this plan to in any way alter it or prevent it.
- d) Jesus offers no explanation as to the identity of these other sheep. They would not understand until He had been lifted up and all things accomplished which would make this happening possible. (v. 8:28) It would be explained in depth by the apostle Paul. (Eph. 2:12-15, 3:4-6) These sheep would be called by Jesus through His shepherds. (Acts 18:9-10)

[This was one of the most difficult teachings in the early church. The Jewish Christians were slow to

*give up their favored status. Instead of the two groups forming one flock, they basically believed that the gentiles needed to join their flock. The apostles themselves were slow to accept this doctrine and Jesus ordained the apostle Paul primarily for this task.]*

**10:17-18** *Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father.*

*Jesus again speaks of laying down His life for the sheep. Stressed is the fact that laying down His life is a voluntary act, is according to the will of the Father and so pleases the Father.*

- a) *Laying down His life is a purposeful act unique to the Good Shepherd. An ordinary shepherd might wind up giving his life in defending the sheep, but his death certainly would not be voluntary. He would cling to and struggle for his own life for he knows that with his death the flock would be doomed.*
- b) *Jesus, as the good shepherd, actually gives His life with the purpose of taking it back. His death is planned and directly saves the sheep. Jesus knew that He would give His life, He gave it to take it back, and He knows that His death and resurrection will save the sheep.*
- c) *The deity of Jesus becomes apparent as we see that He indeed had life in himself. His life was His own. He could give it and then take it back at His will. The word translated "power" has a deeper meaning in the original language. Jesus had the right and the authority to give His life. He had the right and the authority in Himself to take it back.*
- d) *It was purely His decision and under His strict control. Many times various groups tried to kill Jesus but He wouldn't allow it. He told Judas at the last supper to go and do what he must. Jesus then went willingly with His abductors and executioners. He could have called down angels at any time but voluntarily gave His life. (vs. 19:10-11)*
- e) *Jesus was not subject to fate but the master of it. When He prayed in the garden "if there be any other way" He was not at the mercy of the Father but was seeking an option that He might take. His temptation was to act independently of the divine will. He controlled His own fate and so His obedience to the Father's will was obedience in its purist and most perfect form. This is what endeared Him to the Father as the Son.*

*[If we are told that we have a fatal disease, we might throw ourselves on the mercy of God and beg Him to heal us. Our fate however rests in God's hands. It is His will that is done whether we choose to accept it or not. We would have no control over such a situation. This was not true of Christ. He had the control over His own life. It would be as though God asked us to give our body over to a fatal disease for His higher purpose and through it all we had the power to heal ourselves at any time. Can you imagine being in complete control of every situation in your life but being told all the while how every situation is to be handled. Jesus as a man had this authority and control and yet submitted it completely to the Father's will and direction. No wonder why He sweats blood in the garden.]*

**10:19-21** *There was a division therefore again among the Jews for these sayings. And many of them said, He hath a devil, and is mad; why hear ye him? Others said, These are not the words of him that hath a devil. Can a devil open the eyes of the blind?*

*The discourse comes to a close and the end result is once again confusion among the people. Jesus was the center of attention in Jerusalem and everyone had their own opinion about Him. His teachings together with His miracles created controversy. The controversy increased as His sayings became more difficult. (vs. 6:52, 7:43, 9:16)*

- a) *Many now believed, based on this latest discourse, that He was indeed demon possessed and insane. When He had first told them that He was going away they reasoned that He would go and teach the gentiles. (v. 7:35) Later, they decided that He was going to commit suicide. (v. 8:22) Now Jesus tells them that He is going to give up His life but that He will take it back again. Based on this saying many wondered why anyone would continue to give Him an audience so that He could expound His foolishness.*
- b) *The second group mentioned had listened to the entire discourse. They grasped enough of it to know that the words of Jesus were not the words of a demon. Also, they could not discount the miracle. They refused to believe that a demon-possessed man could give sight to a man born blind. (v. 9:16, 31-33)*

**10:22-23** *And it was at Jerusalem the feast of the dedication, and it was winter. And Jesus walked in the temple in Solomon's porch.*

*Verse 21 concluded an event in the life of Jesus that took place immediately following the Feast of the Tabernacles that is in October. Verse 22 takes place in Jerusalem during the Feast of Dedication that is in December, some six months later.*

- a) *The gospel records are silent as to the whereabouts of Jesus during the period between these feasts. Whether He remained in Jerusalem during this time or simply returned for the Feast of Dedication is not known. The feast commemorated the rededication of the temple by Judas Maccabee in the year 165 B.C. It was not a major pilgrim feast but attracted many people. It is the Hanukkah which is still celebrated today.*
- b) *Solomon's portico was a covered walkway that ran along the eastern wall. It supposedly was the only part of the original temple that remained intact. The narrative resumes with Jesus walking down this arcade and being confronted by the Jewish leaders.*

**10:24-25** *Then came the Jews round about him, and said unto him, How long dost thou make us to doubt? If thou be the Christ, tell us plainly. Jesus answered them, I told you, and ye believed not: the works that I do in my Father's name, they bear witness of me.*

*They ask Jesus why He is not being up front with them or why He is keeping them in suspense. They want to hear Jesus plainly tell them that He is the Messiah.*

- a) *He responds that He has told them. Jesus puts the blame for any confusion of the matter strictly upon their unbelieving hearts. He then points to the miracles that He performs, in the name of the Father, as bearing witness to the truth of His claims.*
- b) *It is true that Jesus, in so many words, had never told them, "I am the Messiah," as He had told the woman at the well. (vs. 4:25-26) The reason is probably two-fold. First, they had an erroneous idea of what the Messiah was. They were looking for a political deliverer who would*

lead Israel into power as their king. If He told them that He was the Messiah then they would have completely misunderstood.

- c) Second, they probably asked the question solely to entrap Him. If Jesus had told them what they wanted to hear they probably would have used it against Him. (Luke 23:2) Their minds were already made up that He could not be the Messiah.
- d) Jesus told them that He was from above and that true salvation was belief in Him. (v. 6:29) He had portrayed himself as the Bread of Life, the Light of the World and the Living Water, but they did not understand. He was explaining to them the Messiah in spiritual terms but they would have none of it.
- e) The Jews not only ignored His teachings but also the signs that were done to bear witness of His words. On the contrary, they did their best to discredit the miracles, trying to prove they were not of God and doing all in their power to reduce their effect on the people.

**10:26-30 But ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep, as I said unto you. My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any [man] pluck them out of my hand. My Father, which gave [them] me, is greater than all; and no[man] is able to pluck [them] out of my Father's hand. I and [my] Father are one.**

In accordance with the divine perspective of salvation, they did not believe because they were not of His sheep. They had not been drawn or been told taught by the Father or else they would have come to Him. (vs. 6:44-45) From the human perspective of salvation one manifests himself as one of His sheep by hearing the voice of Jesus and following Him. (v. 6:40)

- a) Jesus knows His sheep. He has an intimate knowledge of each of their needs, wants and desires. The word 'sheep' is used in a sense of love and affection. Because He has a deep interest in them He knows exactly how to care for them. (v. 14)
- b) He gives to His sheep eternal life and also security in that life. Eternal life and eternal security go hand in hand. It is the security of the believer that is stressed in these verses. These are very strong statements in the original language amounting to, "they shall not be destroyed forever" or "they shall not perish to eternity."
- c) The word 'pluck' is related to being carried away by a robber or more in line with the example by a wolf. It is the same word that is translated catcheth in verse 12. The idea is that no one can harm or get to the sheep that are in the care of Jesus. (Rom. 8:38-39)

"The word 'any' refers to any power that might attempt it. It will apply either to men or to devils. It is an affirmation that no man, however eloquent in error, or persuasive in infidelity, or cunning in argument, or mighty in rank; and that no devil, with all his malice, power, cunning, or allurements, shall be able to pluck them from His hand." Albert Barnes

[The whole example of sheep and shepherd points to the security of the believer in Christ. The sheep is not an animal known for its intelligence or as an animal that can protect itself. The security of the flock is the responsibility of the shepherd. If sheep are lost it is the shepherd's fault. The natural tendency of sheep is to wander and so the need for a shepherd. Jesus portrays himself as the good or

*the perfect shepherd. The Father gave Him the sheep to protect and to care for. If any sheep were ever lost it would be a reflection upon Him as the shepherd.]*

- d) *The oneness and unity of Jesus and the Father within the Godhead is again expressed. The Father is supreme. Jesus has all of the power and authority of the Godhead in keeping the sheep. The Father has given the sheep to the Son but retains an interest in them.*
- e) *The word 'one' is of neuter gender and so simply expresses union. One commentator puts it, "We (two persons) are one (thing)." There is one Godhead with a diversity of persons. What it means is that Jesus and the Father are equal in the Godhead even though they have somewhat different roles in their common plan according to their common purpose. This plan and purpose involves the welfare of the sheep.*

**10:31-33** *Then the Jews took up stones again to stone him. Jesus answered them, Many good works have I shewed you from my Father; for which of those works do ye stone me? The Jews answered him, saying, For a good work we stone thee not; but for blasphemy; and because that thou, being a man, makest thyself God.*

*Jesus did not tell them plainly that He was the Messiah but told them very plainly that He was equal with God. It was a much greater claim than they believed that their Messiah would ever make. The phrase "took up stones" literally means to carry stones. The idea is that they began to carry stones to Solomon's portico from another location with the intention of stoning Him. While this gathering is going on the dialogue continues.*

- a) *Jesus, well aware of what is going on, asks them for what particular good work were they going to stone Him. To say that Jesus had by this time in His ministry had worked an innumerable amount of good works would probably still be an understatement. He reminds them of these works; furthermore, they all had plenty of opportunity to convict Him of sin and could not. (v. 8:46) So His conclusion is that they must intend on stoning Him for a good work.*
- b) *The Jews reply that not for a good work but for the offense of blasphemy were they going to stone Him. (Lev. 24:16) They accused Him of making himself God. Instead of viewing His miracles and works as manifesting His deity, they view His claims as negating His words and making them evil.*

**10:34-36** *Jesus answered them, Is it not written in your law, I said, Ye are gods? If he called them gods, unto whom the word of God came, and the scripture cannot be broken; Say ye of him, whom the Father hath sanctified, and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest; because I said, I am the Son of God?*

*Jesus defends himself against the charge of blasphemy by appealing to the scriptures, or as He puts it, "their Law." He both compares and contrasts himself to other divinely appointed individuals in the scriptures. He seems to be reminding them of the language used in Psalm 82:1, 6.*

- a) *In the Psalm, God is rebuking the judges of Israel. They were appointed to carry out His judgment. They were to act as an extension of himself or as His representatives among the people. They were specially called out and in all these respects they were called "gods." The argument of Jesus is that a man being called a god is not foreign to the scriptures and so did not prove Him guilty of blasphemy.*

- b) *Jesus refers to himself as one who was divinely appointed. Taking a strict literal and legalistic view of the scriptures, just as they did, He reminds them that this is what the scripture says and scripture cannot be broken. A more literal translation would be, "the scripture is true forever."*
- c) *Having compared himself to other divinely appointed judges, He now contrasts himself against them to show that in reality, He is not like one of these figures but unique among them. He says that He was set apart by the Father and sent into the world. The argument then becomes, "If mere men were referred to as gods in the scriptures in view of their office, then how much more am I worthy to the title Son of God."*
- d) *His claim was not blasphemy, but truth. In view of the scriptures that He had brought to their attention, even if they did not believe Him, His mere reference to himself as God was not enough to convict Him. They needed more proof.*

**10:37-38** *If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not. But if I do, though ye believe not me, believe the works: that ye may know, and believe, that the Father [is] in me, and I in him.*

*Jesus appeals to the signs that He performs and the miracles that He works. These were unmistakably the works of God. They were works of mercy, love and compassion. They were of a supernatural nature and irrefutable.*

- a) *Jesus challenges them to scrutinize these works, that is, to look at them and to put them to the test. It was the works by which His Father bore witness to the words of Jesus. If they did not believe Him, He challenges them to believe in the works, for it was the works that would point to Him as more than a mere man. It was the works that backed-up His claims.*

**10: 39-42** *Therefore they sought again to take him: but he escaped out of their hand, And went away again beyond Jordan into the place where John at first baptized; and there he abode. And many resorted unto him, and said, John did no miracle: but all things that John spake of this man were true. And many believed on him there.*

*His words must have produced some effect, for instead of trying to stone Him they instead attempt to arrest Him, probably for the purpose of taking Him before the Sanhedrin. Again, He escapes for it is not yet His time.*

- a) *Jesus retreated to Bethabara, beyond the Jordan, where John baptized Him. (v. 1:28) Jesus stayed in this location and many there came to believe in Him. They came to this belief based on the testimony of John and more importantly based on the miracles that He worked. They viewed Jesus as greater than John because of the miracles.*