

Who are the Sheep?

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John 10:22-27

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Major QUESTION: *How do I know that I am a Christian?*

Sometimes the question: *How do I know that I am a Christian is discussed using the phrase “assurance of salvation.”*

- *Assurance of salvation – refers to your own understanding and confidence of salvation.*
- Christ as your GOOD SHEPHERD desires all His sheep to walk with 100% assurance.
- Unfortunately, Many people within the Church have a ‘false assurance.’
- *The simplest ground of ASSURANCE is SIMPLY the PROMISE of GOD.*
 - Romans 10:13 – [13] *All who call on the name of the Lord will be saved.*
- Another way to ARRIVE @ assurance is to LOOK at the NT – and see what a true CHRISTIAN is supposed to look like. And then compare your life with the NT’s picture.
- Here JESUS makes a definitive STATEMENT ABOUT THE SHEEP, which I think is very helpful for us: *“My sheep hear my voice, I know them, and they follow me.”*

The CONTEXT of the PASSAGE

A few months have gone by... since the Good Shepherd Discourse...that was at the Feast of Tabernacles in what would be our October. It is now December.

John 10:22 – [22] *At that time the Feast of Dedication took place at Jerusalem. It was winter,*

- A quick word about the Feast of Dedication.
- Not mentioned in the OT.
 - Antiochus Epiphanes ... the Seleucid Ruler under the Greek Empire.
 - In 167 A.D. he went into the TEMPLE and sacrificed a PIG to ZUES on the ALTAR.
- The JEWS revolted under the LEADERSHIP of Judas Maccabaeus (the Hebrew Hammer!). And they overthrew the GREEKS.
 - And they rededicated the Temple to the Lord in 165 A. D.
 - That become their FEAST of DEDICATION.
- Christ ultimately fulfills the FEAST of DEDICATION.
 - Matthew 12:6 – [6] *I tell you something greater than the temple is here.*
 - John 2:14 – [14] *Destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it up.*

John 10:23 - [23] *and Jesus was walking in the temple, in the colonnade of Solomon.*

- Probably because it was cold. Jesus was walking in the colonnade of Solomon (which is a covered area on the Eastern side of the Temple).

John 10:24 – [24] *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.”*

- Jews – would refer primarily to Jewish people living in and around Jerusalem.
 - John 10:31 - [31] *The Jews picked up stones again to stone him.*

- They are asking this question in order to attack him.
 - The CONCEPT of MESSIAH was a politically CHARGED title.
 - So it was a TITLE that JESUS used very CAUTIOUSLY.
 - With the woman at the WELL. She said (John 4:25) *"I know that Messiah is coming (he who is called Christ). When he comes, he will tell us all things."* [26] *Jesus said to her, "I who speak to you am he."*
 - Peter said Matthew 16, *"You are the Christ, the Son of the Living God."*
 - But Matthew tells us that Jesus then *"strictly charged his disciples to tell no one explicitly that he is the Christ"*.
 - And He has all but told them that He is Messiah.
 - John 5:17 – [17] *But Jesus answered them, "My Father is working until now, and I am working."*
 - He said remember in John 8:58 – [58] *Before Abraham was I am.*
- At every step our world answers CHRIST in UNBELIEF. God has the answers. But the world will not listen.

This is CHRIST's response. John 10:25 – [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,*

- Jesus had told THEM and they have rejected HIM.
- JESUS had performed many signs and mighty works. Healings over all of Judea and they did not believe. Including the SIGNS of Isaiah 35 – which only the Messiah would do.

John 10:26 – [26] *but you do not believe because you are not among my sheep.*

- What is Jesus saying?
- *JESUS is SAYING that the GROUNDS of BELIEF is the that you are already a SHEEP.*
- Or in this case, *The GROUNDS for why they do not BELIEVE is because they are not His SHEEP.*
- The Sheep are GIVEN to Christ before the Foundation of the WORLD.
 - Ephesians 1:4 – [4] *even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love [5] he predestined us for adoption as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will.*
 - These whom the Father chose were given to the Son. John 10:29 – [29] *My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all.*
 - John 6:37 – [37] *All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never cast out.*
 - There is a certainty... that all whom the Father chose will ultimately be saved.
 - And the SON is sent on a MISSION to SAVE them.

How do you know if you are Christ's sheep?

Notice that they are His – "My"

John 10:27 – [27] *My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me.*

- 1) *Christ's Sheep hear their Shepherd*
 - This is in reference to the EFFECTUAL calling of GOD.
 - John 10:3 – [3] ... *The sheep hear his voice, and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out.*
 - John 10:16 – [16] *And I have other sheep that are not of this fold. I must bring them also, and they will listen to my voice.*

- The voice is NOT an audible voice from HEAVEN.
 - It's a VOICE in the INNER MAN.
 - It's a VOICE that overcomes your RESISTANCE to the TRUTH.
- For this reason – sometimes Christians in the NT – were simply known as “The Called”
 - 1 Corinthians 1:2 – [2] To the church of God that is in Corinth, to those sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints together with all those who in every place call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ...
 - 1 Corinthians 1:24 – [24] but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks,
 - Ephesians 4:1 – [1] I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called...
 - Ephesians 4:4 – [4] just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call...
 - 2 Timothy 1:9 – [9] who saved us and called us to a holy calling,
 - 1 Peter 2:9 – [9] ...that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.
- The SHEEP when they are CALLED – ‘hear’ the voice of Christ.
 - Hearing – means they understand and believe the truth in the heart.
 - Jesus said @ the End of the Sermon on the Mount. Everyone then who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock. (Matthew 7:24)
 - The CHRISTIAN is the one who hears. Matthew 13:23 – [23] As for what was sown on good soil, this is the one who hears the word and understands it. He indeed bears fruit and yields, in one case a hundredfold, in another sixty, and in another thirty.
 - So Jesus would say things like John 8:47 – [47] Whoever is of God hears the words of God. The reason why you do not hear them is that you are not of God.
 - And Matthew 13:9 – [9] He who has ears, let him hear.
 - The HEARING RESULTS in BELIEF in the GOSPEL.

2) Christ's Sheep are Known by their Shepherd

- “And I know them.”
 - The LORD has a knowledge of EVERYONE.
 - John 2:23 – Jesus knew what was in man. For this reason He did not entrust himself to them
- So this is we’ve been SAYING... there is a KNOWLEDGE of INTIMACY. A Special Love. (Adam knew his wife) That CHRIST has for the SHEEP. A special RELATIONSHIP.
 - John 10:14 – [14] I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me, [15] just as the Father knows me and I know the Father
 - Paul says in 2 Timothy 2:19 – [19] But God's firm foundation stands, bearing this seal: “The Lord knows those who are his.”
- The LORD JESUS reveals Himself to us in the Gospel.
 - For the CHRISTIAN – the KNOWLEDGE of our SAVIOR always begins with the GOSPEL. The Cross and the Resurrection.
 - Understanding God's LOVE revealed to us in the Cross.

- Romans 8:1 – [1] *There is therefore no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. [2] For the law of the Spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death.*
- The CROSS is the GREAT starting point to KNOWING GOD.
- The Lord Jesus reveals Himself to us by His Spirit.
 - Romans 8:11 – [11] *If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit who dwells in you.*
 - It's the IMPARTATION of SPIRITUAL LIFE.
 - New desires. New convictions.
 - Matthew 5:6 – *A Hunger and Thirst for Righteousness.*
- The Lord Jesus brings us into a knowledge of Him through His Providential Care.
 - Romans 8:28 – [28] *And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose.*
 - You begin to LOVE the doctrine of PROVIDENCE.
 - You understand Psalm 23 Experientially.
 - PROVIDENCE is GOD'S HAND GUIDING you in 3 D.
 - God only works all things for good, to those who love Him and are called according to His purpose. But you see your LIFE unfolding for your GOOD and CHRIST'S GLORY.
- The LORD brings us to a knowledge of Himself through His Word.
 - You begin to hunger for the WORD of TRUTH.
 - Believers revel in the TRUTH. For they find the revelation of God to them.

3) *Christ's Sheep follow their Shepherd*

- True FAITH manifests itself in the TRUST to FOLLOW CHRIST.
- Following Christ begins as FAITH in the Son of God.
- FOLLOWING – denotes discipleship.
 - John 10:4 – [4] *the sheep follow him, for they know his voice...*
 - True FAITH always expresses itself in a desire to FOLLOW CHRIST.
 - Sheep Follow their SHEPHERD.
 - Matthew 8:22 – [22] *Follow me, and leave the dead to bury their own dead.*
 - Matthew 8:9 – [9] *As Jesus passed on from there, he saw a man called Matthew sitting at the tax booth, and he said to him, "Follow Me." And he rose and followed him.*
- The initial act of following Christ is an act of FAITH.