

John 10:22-30 ESV

The Blessed Sheep!

Sunday, April 17 at 8:00 & 10:45 + Monday, April 18 at 7 PM

The Fourth Sunday of Easter – 2016

Introduction: Dear friends: Let us *fully realize* that the importance of *knowing Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord* is far more important than anything else in our lives! If that is not true for you, I strongly urge you to repent!

1. **Festival of Re-Dedication:** ²² At that time the [Festival of Re-Dedication] took place at Jerusalem. It was winter, ²³ and Jesus was walking in the temple, in the colonnade of Solomon [which was a porch with a roof].
 - a. The festival is also known by the names *Hanukkah* and *the Festival of Lights*.
 - b. It may have been the festival during which Jesus – *the True Light of the World* – was conceived (see the “God With Us” brochure for more info).
 - c. As prophesied in Daniel 11:31b, the temple in Jerusalem was desecrated. From 1 Maccabees – *which is not Holy Scripture, but a historical account* – we can better understand the situation: ^{NRSV} **1 Maccabees 1:41** “Then the king wrote to his whole kingdom that all should be one people, ⁴² and that all should give up their particular customs. ⁴³ All the Gentiles accepted the command of the king. Many even from Israel gladly adopted his religion; they sacrificed to idols and profaned [*thus dishonored*] the Sabbath. ⁴⁴ And the king sent letters by messengers to Jerusalem and the towns of Judah; he directed them to follow customs strange to the land, ⁴⁵ to forbid burnt

offerings and sacrifices and drink offerings in the sanctuary, to profane Sabbaths and festivals,⁴⁶ to defile the sanctuary and the priests,⁴⁷ to build altars...for idols, to sacrifice swine and other unclean animals,⁴⁸ and to leave their sons uncircumcised. They were to make themselves abominable by everything unclean and profane,⁴⁹ so that they would forget the law and change all the ordinances.⁵⁰ He added, “And whoever does not obey the command of the king shall die.” *[If you keep reading, it gets even worse.]* ...⁶² But many in Israel stood firm and were resolved in their hearts not to eat unclean food.⁶³ They chose to die rather than to be defiled by food or to profane the holy covenant; and they did die.

// Don't miss this point: The ♣Sabbaths, ♣festivals, and ♣temple sacrifices were all pointing to the Christ, so to *dishonor* such things was to *reject* the Promised Messiah! Are there ways in our lives where we are not standing firm, but compromising with God's precious truth?

- d. In 164 BC the temple was rededicated, then *that day was celebrated each year with much joy!*

2. **Hard hearts:**

- a. 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.”** // Some seek the Christ *because they know they desperately need Him to take away their sins!* However, the Jews who surrounded Jesus in Solomon's colonnade were not looking to benefit from Him. Instead, they wanted to discredit him. Some people are bent on rejecting the only One through whom heaven is open for them☹ (Acts 4:12; John 14:6).

- b. 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, ²⁶ but you do not believe because you are not among my sheep.”**

// How did Jesus know? *By Divine*

foreknowledge! What about Jesus being the

Christ, it was obvious: He was ♦fulfilling

hundreds of OT prophecies and ♦doing countless

miracles in the Father’s name. But, sadly, they

still did not believe. Why?

- i. They were unaware of their need for Jesus; they thought that *on their own* they were good enough to enter into heaven.
- ii. They didn’t bother to look into the OT Scriptures, to see a clear picture of Jesus.
- iii. They were more concerned about *this life* than *the life to come*.

3. **Blessed Sheep:**

- a. ²⁷ **“My sheep hear my voice, and I know them**

[or learn them], and they follow me. // So we,

being sheep of the Good Shepherd, hear His

voice, thus we ✓gladly listen to and ✓rightly

respond to **God’s Word**; furthermore, Jesus

knows all about us to bless us **and we** gladly

follow Him!

- b. ²⁸ **I give them eternal life, and they will never**

*[οὐ μὴ] **perish [forever]** [thus, “be separated from*

God, life, and blessedness forever” (Lenski, 755), and no

one will snatch them *[thus steal, carry off, drag*

*away, or take away] **out of my hand.*** // That is true

for all those *predestined* or *chosen* (Eph. 1:3-6) by God in Christ before creation. God choosing us before time “is a cause that gains, works, helps, and promotes our salvation and what belongs to it” (FC SD XI 8). *We who know Jesus are blessed!*

- c. ²⁹ **My Father, who has given** [my sheep] **to me, is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch them** [*thus steal, carry off, drag away, or take away*] **out of the Father’s hand.** // Then, for even greater certainty of our salvation through Jesus, we are also told that the Father – **who is the GREATEST** – *also has us in His hand!*
- d. ³⁰ **I and the Father are one.”** // That statement points to the Holy Trinity – *three Divine Persons in one Divine Godhead!* They all work together to bless us now and forever!

Conclusion: When we know Jesus as Savior and Lord, *we are blessed!* The Father has worked **by** the Spirit **through** Holy Baptism **to** clothe us in Jesus. Then we faithfully ➔ hear His forgiveness, ➔ feed on His Word, ➔ receive the Holy Supper, and ➔ joyfully live for the One who lived, died, and was raised for our eternal benefit!

Let us pray: Dear Father, *thank You for choosing us*; dear Jesus, *thank You for taking away our sins*; dear Holy Spirit, *thank You for giving us eternal life through Jesus!*

And all God’s people said: Amen!