

THE BEREANS

ACTS 17:11

John 10:22-42

Lesson #36

My Sheep

04/10/2016

The Context

- The Jewish leaders were especially sensitive to any form of blasphemy at this time.



חנוכה

- The Feast of Dedication (hanukkah) - celebrating the purification and rededication of the temple by Judas the Maccabee in 165 B.C. (shortly after it had been desecrated by Antiochus Epiphanes).

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"²² At that time the Feast of the Dedication took place at Jerusalem; ²³ it was winter, and Jesus was walking in the temple in the portico of Solomon. ²⁴ The Jews therefore gathered around Him, and were saying 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, these bear witness of Me. ²⁶ But you do not believe, because you are not of My sheep. ²⁷ My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me; ²⁸ and I give eternal life to them, and they shall never perish; and no one shall snatch them out of My hand. ²⁹ 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. ³⁰ I and the Father are one."

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"²⁷ My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me; ²⁸ and I give eternal life to them, and they shall never perish; and no one shall snatch them out of My hand. ²⁹ 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. ³⁰ I and the Father are one."

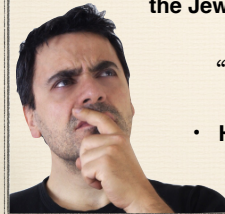
Who are "Jesus' sheep"?

- The context must determine what "my sheep" means - the Jewish nation or the remnant of believers within it.

John 1:11

"He came to His own, and those who were His own did not receive Him"

- How would the leaders of Israel receive this seeing that they were not following Jesus?



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How are these choices related?

1.
God's choice
of man
(Elect TO
believe)

based on God's
sovereign choice
independent of
human choice

2.
Man's choice
of God
(Elect THROUGH
belief)

based on God's
foreknowledge of
human free choice

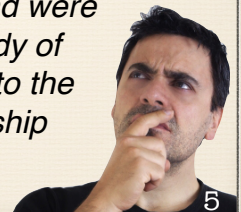
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Who are "My sheep" in John 10?

- This is a major text supporting God's choice of man (elect TO believe).
- It could refer to the believing remnant within Israel who recognize Jesus as the Christ.

We come to the Father through the Son, while in a sense the **Jews of Jesus' time came to the Son through the Father** and were then able to take part in the "Body of Christ" where only those joined to the Son can remain in right relationship with the Father.



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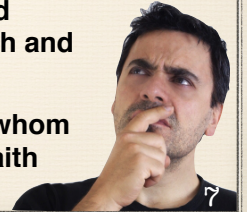
Who are "My sheep" in John 10?

1. This is a major text supporting God's choice of man (elect TO believe).
 2. It could refer to the believing remnant within Israel who recognize Jesus as the Christ.
- **The election of individuals to salvation has been a hotly debated topic in Christian theology.**
 1. God's people are going to read the texts on this issue in different ways.
 2. All Christian believe in election and predestination. The issue is - based on what - God's choice or man's.



TULIP (Reformed Theology)

- **T**otal depravity - we are incapable of responding to Christ without first being regenerated.
- **U**nconditional election - God chose individuals for salvation based on His sovereign will alone.
- **L**imited atonement - Christ's death effected the redemption of the elect only.
- **I**rresistible grace - All whom God calls cannot but respond with faith and obedience.
- **P**reservation of the saints - All whom God calls will not fail to display faith and good works until the end.



TULIP's roots (presuppositions)



- The reading of both O.T. and N.T. as though they are addressed TO and ABOUT us.
- God's sovereignty demands the micromanagement of all things based on His free choice alone.
- The belief that human free choice is a meritorious work.
- All of Scripture must be understood so as to conform to the above foundations.



Pruning TULIP (Arminian theology)

- **T**otal depravity - Effects every area of life but not completely.
- **U**nconditional election - God elected Christ and all that He foresaw would freely respond to him.
- **L**imited atonement - Christ's death paid the debt of all humanity but its benefits were realized only by those who received Christ by faith.
- **I**rresistible grace - We are free to receive or reject Christ.
- **P**erseverance of the saints - Salvation is for those who maintain their faith and hope in Christ.



"Calvinism emphasizes divine sovereignty and free grace; Arminianism emphasizes human responsibility. The one restricts the saving grace to the elect; the other extends it to all men on the condition of faith. Both are right in what they assert; both are wrong in what they deny. . . . The Bible gives us a theology which is more human than Calvinism, and more divine than Arminianism, and more Christian than either of them."

Philip Schaff, History of the Christian Church, vo. VIII:815-6

**The Good Shepherd
dies for, feeds, protects, and gives
eternal life to the sheep
but does not control them.**

"It is the Godfather,
not God the Father,
who makes you an offer
you can't refuse."

Peter Kreeft

Romans 8:28

“²⁸ And we know that God **works all things together** for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.

“²⁹ For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the first-born among many brethren; ³⁰ and whom He predestined, these He also called; and whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified.”

The “all things” include

1. our free decisions,
2. world circumstances
3. His ultimate purpose

“His purpose” is

1. our calling in Christ,
2. conformed to his image
3. speaking truth in love

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Philippians 2

“¹² So then, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, **work out your salvation with fear and trembling;** ¹³ **for it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure.**”

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“My sheep”

- They hear, recognize, & follow the voice of the Good Shepherd.
- The Good Shepherd will not let the predators get to the sheep. **What does this mean?**

✓ It does not mean that they will never go astray because many “saints” in the N.T. were not walking in the grace and truth of Christ.

✓ Could it mean that those who go astray do so only by their own will and are never stolen from the fold?

✓ This view seems to harmonize with the warnings given to the believing church to take responsibility to abide in the faith.

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“My sheep”

- They hear, recognize, & follow the voice of the Good Shepherd.
- The Good Shepherd will not let the predators get to the sheep. **What does this mean?**

✓ The **codependent pastor** - medicating his personal spiritual needs through the manipulation of the sheep to affirm him.

✓ The **controlling pastor** - managing his lack of faith by micromanaging the sheep and expelling those who do not cooperate.

✓ **NOTE: Rebellious sheep** can be healthy if they are rebelling against thieves & robbers.

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A full explanation of God’s choices and our choices lies above our spiritual pay-grade.

Deuteronomy 29:29

“The secret things belong to the Lord our God, but the things revealed belong to us and to our sons forever, that we may observe all the words of this law.”



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God’s Grace should inspire awe and worship not passivity and fatalism or pride and fear.

Romans 11:33

“Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God!

How unsearchable are His judgments and unfathomable His ways!”



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