**“I AND THE FATHER ARE ONE”**

We’re in the middle of John Chapter 10, which means that we’re halfway thru our study of the Gospel of John (21 chapters). However, chronologically, we’re actually at the end of Jesus’ life and earthly ministry. Jesus is heading ever closer to the cross, now just a few months away. The last half of the Gospel of John (from Ch 12 on) covers the final week of Jesus’ life plus the account of Jesus’ resurrection and a series of post-resurrection appearances that Jesus makes to His disciples. My goal is to get thru John Ch 11 by the end of February, take a break, then when we come back in March move into First Corinthians (next quarterly’s study).

In John 10 v 30, Jesus makes this claim: “I and the Father are one.” When He says this He isn’t merely stating that He and the Father are in agreement, or that they are united in purpose, or that they have this especially close relationship or that they share the same theology. All this is true. No, what Jesus is really saying is that He and the Father are one in their very essence – they are both of the same divine, eternal and holy nature. They are both God. This is a fundamentally important doctrine to grasp. The Gospel of John begins with these words: “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God.” (1:1-2) We know that “the Word” John refers to here is Jesus. How? Because later in John 1:14 he says, “And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen His glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.” So the Apostle John understands Jesus’ claim to be God and he believes it and he affirms it and he emphasizes it in his gospel. The Pharisees, well let’s just say, they ALSO understand Jesus’ claim to be God. But they don’t like it one bit. This claim infuriates them. They view it as blasphemy and because of it they want to kill Jesus. They’ve tried unsuccessfully 3 previous times to kill Him. In John 5:18 we’re told, “This was why the Jews were seeking all the more to kill Him, because not only was He breaking the Sabbath, but He was even calling God His own Father, making Himself equal with God.” Then in John 7:1 it says that, “Jesus went about in Galilee. He would not go about in Judea, because the Jews were seeking to kill him.” Then at the end of John Ch 8 Jesus claimed to be the Yahweh, the “I AM” of the O.T. – “Jesus said to [the Pharisees], ‘Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I am.’ So they picked up stones to throw at him, but Jesus hid himself and went out of the temple.” Three times so far in our study of the Gospel of John we’re told the Jews wanted to kill Jesus because of His claim to be God. So what do you suppose is going to be their reaction when Jesus again makes His claim to be God in verse 30? We’ll take a look at that later, but for now let’s pick up the narrative where we left off last week…

READ John 10:22

The Feast of Dedication is also known to the Jews as the Festival of Lights. We know it as Hanukkah. It takes place in December, 2 months after the Feast of Tabernacles, which takes place in October. This was the setting for John Chs 7-8. Then all the events of Chs 9-10 that we have seen so far happened soon after the Feast of Tabernacles. So 2 months has passed since we left off in verse 21. During this 2 months John doesn’t record where Jesus and His disciples went. But Luke does. Luke Chs 9-13 record Jesus ministry and teachings as He and His disciples traveled from Jerusalem up to Samaria, then to various towns in Judea including Bethany where Mary and Martha and Lazarus lived. Jesus then makes His way back to Jerusalem for the Feast of Dedication.

[brief background as to what the Feast of Dedication celebrated]

How interesting that the nation of Israel is here in this passage celebrates their human deliverer, Judas Maccabeus, while they reject their spiritual Deliver, Jesus.

There’s a little comment that John adds at the end of v 22 – “It was winter.” Yes, it was winter physically. After all it is December and in Israel it is cold. It even snows in the Judean Hill Country and in Jerusalem occasionally. But it was also very much winter in a spiritually sense, in the hearts of the Jews and the nation of Israel.

READ John 10:23-24

Jesus is back in Jerusalem, in the Temple. He’s walking “in the colonnade of Solomon,” also known as Solomon’s Portico. There Jesus is once again confronted by the Jews. They ask Jesus a question. They want to know if He is, in fact, the Christ, the Messiah. Now, while that IS an important question, it’s a question that Jesus has ALREADY answered. He’s told them before who He is. He’s made the claim to be the Christ, the Son of God in Chs 5 and 7 and 8. So why are they asking Him again? Do they really want to know? No. Jesus has already told them and they didn’t believe Him. They have an ulterior motive, which is, they want to incite the large crowd that’s gathered for the Feast of Dedication against Jesus. Make no mistake. They still want Jesus dead. Nothing’s changed in 2 months.

READ John 10:25-26

“I’ve already told you and you don’t believe, despite all the signs, the works that I’ve done, all of which testify about Me, that I’m from God operating by My Father’s divine will and by His authority.” Even one of their own, Nicodemus, admitted when he was talking to Jesus back in Ch 3: “Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher come from God, for no one can do these signs that you do unless God is with him.” (3:2) They had clear evidence that Jesus was from God and they knew His claims to be God. The problem is not a lack of knowledge, but of unbelief. By the way, this whole matter of believing in Jesus is a theme that runs all the way thru the Gospel of John and it’s the reason why John penned his gospel. He took the time to record many of the words that Jesus spoke and many of the works that Jesus did – why? We already had 3 other gospels. Why do we need another one? Here’s why – “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.” (John 20:31) Despite all the clear evidence the Pharisees have been given, they do not believe that Jesus is who He claims to be. They reject Jesus. And for this they are fully culpable and they will be judged by God for their unbelief. Jesus made it clear in John Ch 3 and again in John Ch 8 that there will be divine judgment for one’s unbelief.

So in v 25 when Jesus says, “you do not believe,” we see that in regard to salvation there is a willful act of belief, of placing one’s faith and trust in Jesus to save them. And then in v 26 when Jesus says, “You don’t believe because you are not among My sheep,” we see that in regard to salvation there is an element of God’s sovereignty. Earlier in Ch 10 Jesus said, “When He has brought out all His own, He goes before them, and the sheep follow Him, for they know His voice.” (10:4) “I am the good Shepherd. I know My own and My own know Me” (10:14). Here’s the bottom line: “You don’t belong to Me – You are not among My sheep.”

We are now in the portion of John Ch 10 that addresses the sovereignty of God. So, as a matter of full disclosure let me tell you where I stand on God’s sovereignty versus human free will in the salvation process. On the surface these 2 doctrines (both taught in scripture) might seem to be contradictory. But I believe that they work together somehow, someway, though I can’t fully explain how. It’s one of those mysteries that I’ve wrestled with (lean too heavy on the side of human free will then you could become legalistic; lean too heavy on the side of the sovereignty of God and you could become fatalistic). I believe that the salvation of one’s soul is a creation, it is the work of God in us. The Holy Spirit regenerates. You and I cannot create ourselves. We didn’t create ourselves physically when we were conceived and born into this world. And we don’t create ourselves spiritually when we are “born again.” These are the work of God. He may involve humans in the work. But it is His work. Eph 2:8-10 says, “For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.” So the question might be raised, can a lost sinner “make a decision” for Christ? Yes, but only if the Holy Spirit prompts him, convicts him of his need for a savior, only if the Father draws him. John 6:65 says, “no one can come to Me unless it is granted him by the Father.”

READ John 10:27-29 -- This is my shouting ground!

My salvation is secured. From my perspective I was saved as a result of my choice to follow Jesus way back when. But my salvation is secured because God has given me (the gift of) eternal life. It was not merited. I didn’t earn it. It was a love gift. And because I didn’t do anything to earn it then I can’t do anything to lose it. And it’s eternal life. My salvation is secured because it is eternal life, not conditional life or temporary life. And this eternal life doesn’t begin when I die. It began when I was saved. My salvation is secured because I am doubly held – in v 28 by Jesus’ hand and in v 29 by the Father’s hand. “No one is able to snatch” me out of the Father’s hand. “No one” would include Satan. That great accuser of the saints has no claim on me. “Who shall bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died--more than that, who was raised--who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us.” (Rom 8:33-34) When Satan stands before God and accuses us when we mess up, Jesus is standing at the right hand of the Father and acting as our advocate, interceding on our behalf, our defense attorney.

“No one” also includes me. Not even I can snatch myself out of God’s hand. “No one” means nothing. “For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.” (Rom 8:38-39)

In John Ch 10 we see that the Father and the Son work together in securing the sheep. In Ephesians Ch 1 we see that the Holy Spirit is also involved. We “were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it…” (1:13-14) My salvation is secured not because of me but because of Him.

READ John 10:30-33

Jesus makes another claim that He is God, the Jews understand it clearly and again they become angry at Him and try to kill Him, again, for the fourth time in John’s gospel. They still do not believe Him! These Pharisees are following another shepherd. Who is that? In John Ch 8 Jesus told them who it was – the devil, Satan. The Pharisees accused Jesus of being demon-possessed, v 20, when in fact they were the ones following the devil!

READ John 10:34-38

Jesus wants the Jews to just look at the evidence. Don’t reject His words, His claims, without looking at His works, the things He’s been doing. If they will do that then they will see that the works Jesus is doing are what the scriptures say that the Messiah will do. Remember what Jesus told the disciples of John the Baptist when they inquired for John if He really was the Christ? Matt 11:4-5: “Jesus answered them, ‘Go and tell John what you hear and see: the blind receive their sight and the lame walk, lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear, and the dead are raised up, and the poor have good news preached to them.’” In other words, the works that Jesus has been doing and will continue to do is all the proof needed to validate His claims. “If I am not doing the works of my Father, then do not believe Me; but if I do them, even though you do not believe Me, believe the works.” Then at the end of v 38 Jesus repeats what He said in v 30 only He states it a slightly different way – “the Father is in me and I am in the Father.” In other words, “I am God.” Jesus never backs down from that fundamentally important claim.

READ John 10:39-40

Jesus leaves Jerusalem which ends His public ministry there. He’s once again been rejected by the Jewish leadership. He heads across the Jordan River to where John the Baptist had preached and baptized. He will stay there for a little while. In John Ch 11 He returns to Bethany and then from there the other gospel accounts tell us that Jesus will go thru Samaria and Galilee before returning to Jerusalem to face the cross.

READ John 10:41-42

Rejected in Jerusalem in large part to the influence of the Jewish religious leaders, Jesus finds receptive hearts in the dry desert region of the Jordan River valley. God in His sovereignty finds the believing hearts, responds to those who are seeking Him. “And many believed in Him there.”

Application

Why unbelief. It isn’t that people reject Jesus because He offers eternal life and peace with God. They reject Jesus because He exposes their sin and they don’t want Him interfering with their life. John 3:19-20: “And this is the judgment: the light has come into the world, and people loved the darkness rather than the light because their works were evil. For everyone who does wicked things hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his works should be exposed.”

The world, the religious establishment hated Jesus and they will hate us because we proclaim the same message, the truth from God’s inspired Word. Don’t buy in to the compromising philosophy of this world, those who say that what they are doing is OK, everyone’s doing it, it’s acceptable in our society. Follow Jesus, follow what He says, listen to HIS voice. It’s the voice of God.

“See to it that no one takes you captive by philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition, according to the elemental spirits of the world, and not according to Christ. For in Him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily.” (Colossians 2:8-9)