

(Read text at the end of the introduction, as indicated.)

In the Name of the Great Shepherd of the Sheep, our risen Lord Jesus Christ,

How many people have been redeemed by the blood of Jesus Christ? The apostle Paul tells us that *“God was in Christ reconciling the WHOLE WORLD unto Himself, not counting their trespasses against them.”* (2Cor. 5:19)

Every Christ-believer here today knows that. I can’t remember anyone in the congregations I have served who asked whether he or she was redeemed from sin, death and hell. But many have wondered whether they are among the **“Elect”** of God, whether God **chose** them in eternity to be finally saved.

When Christians are greatly troubled over their sins, experiencing great trial in their lives, or facing death, they wonder whether God may forsake them and their faith in Christ may be lost in the end. ***How May We Know that We Are Truly the Elect of God?*** Let’s look for the answer in our text – **John 10:22-30** . . .

I.

More than 160 years before Christ was born, a very wicked man ruled the Jews. *Antiochus Epiphanes* was his name. During his rule he **desecrated** the altar of God’s temple in Jerusalem by offering sacrifices to his heathen gods. Some years later, *Judas Maccabeus* purified and rededicated the Jerusalem temple.

From then on, the Jews celebrated this event as **“HANUKKAH”** – *“the Festival of Lights.”* **HANUKKAH** is celebrated by the Jews around Christmas time. At this festival the Jews light candles in the temple and in their homes to represent the light and truth restored to the temple worship by Judas Maccabeus.

Jesus had come to celebrate this festival of light. After all, He Himself is the **true Purifier** of the temple and the altar of God. He had come to shed His divine and saving light on the darkness of the Jewish hearts. **But the Jews were not interested in His light.** They did not believe in Him.

After they had surrounded our Lord on Solomon’s porch, the Jews tried to trap Him in a word game. **“How long do you keep us in doubt?”** They asked. **“If You are the Christ, tell us plainly.”** The Jews implied that it was Jesus’ **fault** that they could not believe in Him as the promised Messiah. They suggested that Jesus had only **confused** them with His words.

So it is to this very day. Many who do not believe the word of Christ in the Bible, complain that somehow **God must be at fault!** I once sat next to a man on a plane who insisted that the question of whether **homosexuality** is condemned in the Bible is a matter of **interpretation**. He claimed that the record of the judgment of Sodom and Gomorrah, as well as other passages of Scripture were *too hard to understand*.

In various ways we hear people say, *“If God wants us to believe in Jesus, then why*

doesn't He make Himself plain, or reveal Himself visibly?" When I was a child and disobeyed my Father, I tried using the excuse that I had not understood him. **It never worked!** My father knew that **the fault was mine, not his.**

To those who want to blame their unbelief on Christ or His word, Jesus says: ***"But you do not believe, because you are not of my sheep. My sheep listen to My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me, and I give unto them eternal life."*** When a shepherd calls across the grasslands to his sheep, many other creatures may hear his voice too. But only his flock will hear him ***from within themselves,*** and follow him.

It's the same with the **voice** our Good Shepherd **in His Word.** Only those who are truly Christ's sheep will respond to His call to repent of their sins and believe in Him as their Savior. **Only Christ's true sheep will know Him** as their Savior and desire the heavenly pasture of eternal life above all else.

Are you Christ's sheep? Ask yourself whether you respond to His words with faith and love. **Only His chosen sheep** will hear Him call out in His Word and follow Him. When Jesus ascended into heaven He gave shepherds to His dear flock to care for them in His place. Through the Word of God which his pastors or under-shepherds preach, the Great Shepherd **still speaks to the sheep of His flock.**

When He sent out His disciples to proclaim His Word, Jesus said: ***"He who hears you, hears Me."*** So, when your heart responds in faith when the gospel of Christ is brought to you, you are responding to Christ Himself. ***You are hearing His voice.*** You are following Him from within, as **only His true sheep can do!**

II.

And if you are His sheep, you have nothing else to fear! For concerning the sheep Who hear His voice He says: ***"They will never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand. My Father Who has given them to Me is great than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of My Father's hand. I and the Father are ONE."*** Here is security for those who hear the Shepherd's voice! Use this passage against all those doubts and fears the Devil whispers in your ears!

First, Jesus says: ***"My sheep shall have everlasting life and never be lost, because no one will ever be able to snatch them out My hand."*** Can you imagine how the Jews must have looked at Jesus when He spoke of His **hand** as having such tremendous **holding power?** How they must have **mocked Him** when they saw those **hands** nailed to the cross, dripping with blood!

But once again, their feelings and their sight deceived them! Christ had **allowed** His hands to be pierced! As He says earlier in this same chapter: ***"No one takes My life from Me, but I lay it down by Myself."*** Jesus laid down His life in order to crush the power of **Satan and sin** to condemn mankind! He arose from the dead and marched right into hell to proclaim His victory to all the evil angels and unbelieving souls of the past! **This is not the record of a weakling, but of a great Champion and Savior!**

Then, to show that His words are not merely the promise of a poor carpenter's Son from Nazareth, Jesus says, **"I am ONE with the Father."** It was His heavenly Father Who gave Him the sheep in the first place! Since no one has the power to tear the sheep from the **Father's hand**, neither has anyone the power to tear the sheep from the **Father's Son!**

Remember this too: The election or choosing of the sheep was done **in eternity** – before **time began!** When your daily sins and weaknesses rise up before you, so that you are no longer sure of your place in the chosen flock of the Good Shepherd, remember that **eternity is not affected by our unworthiness on earth.**

Jesus says His Father **"gave"** Him His sheep. Note the **past** tense! The sheep have been **hand-picked** in eternity by the Father and **"given"** to the Son **through** His **redemption** of them, and by **His purpose** to cause them to believe.

The Shepherd knew the names of each of His sheep before He even took on human flesh to purchase us from our sins. **Nothing in hell, heaven, or on earth can change the election of the Almighty and gracious God which He made in eternity!**

Remember that Jesus has already told you that **only** those sheep chosen in eternity *continue to hear His voice in His Word with faith.* Therefore, as long as you are hearing His voice in His Word with Spirit-worked faith, you may be certain that you shall never be torn from the hand of your Lord and Savior! **He is your Good Shepherd from eternity to eternity, and you are His sheep from eternity to eternity!**

So, Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

When you stand in the mirror of God's holy Law
And see yourself, naked – a sinner in the raw;
When Doubt speaks loudly: **"Surely, you're not God's choice!"**
Then wait! . . . Listen! . . . Do you hear the Shepherd's voice?

When you've vowed and you've bowed in your fight against sin,
But fall again and again to your flesh within,
When Doubt gnaws inside: **"Surely, you're not God's choice!"**
Hope yet remains, if you hear the Shepherd's voice.

When your life depresses with problem, peril and pain,
When your flesh leaps and laughs: **"Hah! Your faith is in vain!"**
And Doubt comes again: **"Surely, I'm not God's choice!"** . . .
You're safe in God's palm, **if you hear His Son's voice!**

If you hear these words of Christ above all Doubt's best,
Saying, **"Come to Me ye weary, I will give you rest,"**
Then feel the grip of His hand! Sure you're God's choice!
For only chosen sheep hear the Shepherd's voice! Amen.