

Community Group Discussion Guide

April 27, 2025

John 10:22-39; Hebrews 1:1-3 | Jesus Is Supreme

MOTIVATE

- ⇒ *Share a time in your life when you were a "follower" of someone: it may have been a great high school or college teacher, a coach, an author, a boss, or another important person in your life.*
- ⇒ *What does it mean to follow someone?*

DISCUSS

In John 10, Jesus was in the midst of a tense debate with Jewish authorities over His healing of a blind man (John 9). The crowd had confirmed that this man was born blind, and Jesus had revealed that those who didn't believe His miracles were spiritually blind. He pointed out a distinct divide between those standing around Him: those who followed Him and those who didn't.

Jesus didn't mince words when it came to His role among the Jews: He is the Good Shepherd, but not all Jews were His sheep (John 10:11-16). This wasn't revolutionary teaching or heretical verbiage. He called and others followed. He'd made a name for Himself across the Galilean and Judean lands as one who taught with authority and healed. The Pharisees didn't like that He operated outside of their realm of expertise, and few even attempted to listen to His words with sincerity. In today's passage from John 10:22-39, Jesus made a claim that drew enough attention to lead to His death: He isn't only the Good Shepherd; He is actually God. His deity is affirmed in Hebrews 1:1-3.

1. The works of Jesus reveal His deity.

John 10:22-24: At that time the Feast of Dedication took place at Jerusalem. It was winter, **23** and Jesus was walking in the temple, in the colonnade of Solomon. **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."

John set the stage for this discussion between Jesus and the Jews: in winter, in Jerusalem, at the Festival of Dedication, also known today as Hanukkah or the Festival of Lights. The Feast of Dedication, which was once also called the Feast of the Maccabees, is an eight-day winter festival celebrated by the Jews in the month of December or sometimes late November. The original Feast of Dedication involved a miracle, according to rabbinic tradition. During the 2nd century BC, around 170 years earlier from this passage, during the Intertestamental Period, Syrian leader Antiochus Epiphanes had conquered Jerusalem, desecrated the temple, and set up an altar to a pagan god in it.

A faithful priest, Mattathias, and his son Judas Maccabeus fought against the Syrian leader and his army. When the Jews re-entered the temple, they could only find one small, sealed jug of olive oil that had not been profaned or contaminated by the Seleucids. They used this to light

the menorah in the temple, and though the oil was only enough to last one day, it miraculously lasted eight days—time for more oil to be made ready.

Large Jewish crowds gathered annually in Jerusalem for this festival. Wintertime may have led to Jesus's choice to walk along Solomon's Colonnade, a long, covered pavilion that would have provided shelter from the cold.

⇒ **Understanding this history and context, why would the timing of this festival add to the importance of Jesus' words?**

The religious elite confronted Jesus about His identity. However, they were not seeking understanding but rather a way to convict Him of blasphemy. In verse 24, John wrote, "So the Jews gathered around him." The original Greek verb is used only four other times in the Bible, and three of them deal with a military maneuver (Luke 21:20; Hebrews 11:30; Revelation 20:9). These were people who did not follow Jesus or desire to know Him, and they came in a threatening manner.

On the surface when they asked Jesus, "How long will you keep us in suspense?" it might seem like Jesus hadn't clearly revealed Himself, but nothing could be further from the truth. In John's Gospel alone, Jesus had already identified Himself as the Bread of life (John 6:35), the Light of the world (John 8:12), the I AM (John 8:58), the Gate for the sheep (John 10:7), and the Good Shepherd (John 10:11). Jesus hadn't hidden His identity from them; rather, their unbelief led them to seek the final nail in the coffin for their claim of His blasphemy.

⇒ **How can we be prepared for situations in which others are hostile toward us because of our faith in Jesus?**

The hostile Jews even led Jesus to what they wanted Him to say: "If you are the Messiah, tell us plainly." This Greek word for "plainly" (*parresia*) appears nine times in John but only once in all the other Gospels. It refers to being bold, unreserved, confident, and assured in speech. Though Jesus was never afraid of the Jews' opinions, He often spoke in parables, which He sometimes explained to His disciples (Mark 4:34), often saying that those who have ears to hear will hear, but those who don't, won't. Again, this is a case of belief or unbelief. No matter how Jesus answered, the Jews present would still live in unbelief. They were merely hunting for something to judge Him for.

⇒ **Why do you think some people don't believe that Jesus is God?**

John 10:24-29: *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. **27** My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. **28** I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will 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.*

Though Jesus knew their intentions, He answered them boldly, "I told you, and you do not believe." These Jews had heard Jesus's teachings to the crowds as well as in the temple. The problem was that they didn't believe what He said.

Though Jesus doesn't speak with sarcasm, this seems to be the gist behind His words. They had heard Him. Their ears worked perfectly fine. They had seen Him do miracles like driving out demons, raising the dead, and healing the sick. Yet they still didn't believe. We need this reminder today: Jesus speaks truth. He knows what He's talking about. He'll get us through life. We've seen it, and we've read it in His Word. Now, we just need to trust it.

⇒ **What might Jesus be telling you that you are having a hard time truly hearing and believing?**

Even if He hadn't told them who He was, Jesus' works had shown it. The word for "works" is the same one Jesus used when He told His believers to let their light shine so that others may see their "good works" and give glory to their Father in heaven (Matthew 5:16). A person's works reveal intent (John 3:20). Jesus had invited all to inspect His works—His miracles, healings, blessings, and more—and hold them up to the heart of God.

⇒ **Discuss this quote: Just as Jesus's works revealed who He is, our works reveal who we are: Jesus's sheep or not. Believers cannot see into another person's heart, but we can see signs of genuine faith in their thoughts, words, and actions.**

In verse 26, Jesus brought the topic back to sheep—a common theme throughout the Old Testament. Isaac had so many sheep that the Philistines were jealous (Genesis 26:14). When Jacob met Rachel, she was a shepherdess tending to her sheep, and he mustered enough strength to move the stone off of the well to access water for them (Genesis 29:9-10). Jacob's sons were shepherds of sheep (Genesis 37:2), and in that setting the brothers started to hate Joseph. Moses tended sheep, and a sheep was to be offered for an acceptable sacrifice so that death would pass over the houses of the Israelites who had been enslaved in Egypt (Exodus 12:5). David was a shepherd, and Psalm 23 is one of his most beloved and cherished songs.

It's no surprise that God carries this theme to the New Testament. Jesus, the Good Shepherd, leads us—His sheep. All the stereotypes of sheep are there: smelly, easily frightened, able to get lost, followers of herd mentality.

⇒ **Spiritually, how are we like sheep?**

The parallels between sheep and Jesus's followers can't be missed: We must follow the Shepherd if we have any chance at all in this world. Accepting that we're a sheep to a Good Shepherd takes humility and an honest assessment of ourselves. In fact, most of our testimonies point to our wayward-sheep past compared to our Psalm 23 present. The Jewish leaders of Jesus's day couldn't stoop that low to recognize themselves as sheep.

These Jews questioning Jesus didn't believe because they were not really His sheep. His sheep heard and understood His voice, He knew them, and they obeyed Him. The Jews crowding around Him did none of those things. And because of that, they would never know the promises given to the sheep: eternal life and eternal security.

⇒ **How can you humble yourself to become a sheep of Jesus, a true follower?**
 ⇒ **How does your promise of eternal life and security give you hope for today?**

2. The claims of Jesus reveal His deity.

John 10:30-33: *I and the Father are one.* **31** The Jews picked up stones again to stone him. **32** Jesus answered them, *"I have shown you many good works from the Father; for which of them are you going to stone me?"* **33** The Jews answered him, *"It is not for a good work that we are going to stone you but for blasphemy, because you, being a man, make yourself God."*

Jesus made a statement that He knew would startle His enemies and give them more reason to oppose Him. It was the "plain answer" that the religious leaders had asked for: I and the Father are One. This is as clear a statement of Jesus' deity as you will find anywhere in Scripture. This was even stronger than His statement that He had come down from heaven (John 6:38) or that He existed before Abraham ever lived (John 8:58). The word "one" does not suggest that the Father and the Son are identical persons. Rather, it means that they are one in essence: the Father is God and the Son is God, but the Father is not the Son and the Son is not the Father. Jesus is speaking about unity, not identity.³

This Jesus, who seemingly had been born normally of human parents, grew up in Galilee, and inspired a band of loyal followers, was claiming to be God Himself. This didn't mean that God the Father and God the Son were the same person; in fact, they are not. They have different roles in our world today as well as in its past and future. They are two of the three Persons comprising the one nature of our one triune God.

Jesus knew His identity as God and claimed such, even at a risk to His life. Within the person of Jesus Christ, there are two natures—the divine nature and the human nature. Scripture teaches He is fully divine and fully human. His divinity is on display in passages that describe Him as being equal with God (John 1:1-18; Philippians 2:5-11; Colossians 1:15-20). He possesses attributes that God alone possesses. He performs works that only God performs (Mark 2:5-12). He Himself claims to be the Son of God (Matthew 26:63-64; John 8:58; 17:5).

⇒ **Discuss this quote: Christ either deceived mankind by conscious fraud, or He was Himself deluded and self-deceived, or He was Divine. There is no getting out of this trilemma. It is inexorable.**
– John Duncan (1786–1879)

This was all the Jews needed to try to pinpoint Jesus as a blasphemer; so they "picked up stones again to stone Him." These sons of Abraham were ready to kill the promised "seed" of Abraham for His words (Galatians 3:16), without a trial and without the permission of the Roman government.

Blasphemy means to insult God, slander Him, or make a mockery of Him. Jesus was accused of blasphemy because He claimed to be God. And since many did not believe Him, despite the evidence, Jesus, then, was accused of mocking God Himself and belittling Him to the state of humanity, which was blasphemous except for its truth in Jesus, the Son of God.

Jesus wasn't afraid. He calmly asked which of His works was worthy of the death penalty. Which teaching? Which healing? Which provision? The Jews revealed their thinking: they weren't stoning Him for a miracle but for blasphemy. The biblical definition points to cursing or insulting God, and the penalty was stoning. These Jews could imagine nothing more blasphemous than

claiming that a human was God. Ironically, the Jews judged Jesus for His claims, despite seeing His good works. In contrast, their lack of good works revealed that their claims to be people of God were inconsistent.

⇒ **What works of Christ can you praise Him for today?**

John 10:34-39: Jesus answered them, "Is it not written in your Law, 'I said, you are gods'? **35** If he called them gods to whom the word of God came—and Scripture cannot be broken— **36** do you say of him whom the Father consecrated and sent into the world, 'You are blaspheming,' because I said, 'I am the Son of God'? **37** If I am not doing the works of my Father, then do not believe me; **38** but if I do them, even though you do not believe me, believe the works, that you may know and understand that the Father is in me and I am in the Father." **39** Again they sought to arrest him, but he escaped from their hands.

Jesus responded to their accusation with concepts from Psalm 82. In that setting, God "has taken his place in the divine council" and "in the midst of the gods he holds judgment" (Psalm 82:1). This is quoted in conjunction with Exodus 4:16 where God said to Moses, "He shall speak for you to the people, and he shall be your mouth, and you shall be as God to him." If such can be said of Moses in his interactions with Pharaoh, how much more so the One who is really God sent into the world by the Father? "Scripture cannot be broken" is a strong tribute by Jesus to the solidarity and inspiration of the Old Testament.

⇒ **How is confidence in the authority and trustworthiness of Scripture in keeping with Jesus' attitude?**

Jesus connected the dots between God, the Old Testament, and Himself to clearly reveal that He is one with the Father. Also, He invited His opponents to inspect His works and hold them up to a heavenly standard. This significant challenge revealed just how clearly Jesus is the Light and walked in the light. He offered up His entire life to scrutiny.

- ⇒ **How did Jesus reveal God in everything He did? How did He reveal that He is God?**
- ⇒ **When you "examined Jesus" what did you discover about Him?**
- ⇒ **Why are His teachings and His works not enough to persuade some people to belief in Him as the Messiah?**

Though accusations of blasphemy would eventually lead Jesus to the cross, this was not the appointed time. The Jews attempted to seize Him but He simply walked past them and went on His way.

3. The radiance of Jesus reveals His deity.

Hebrews 1:1-3: 1 Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, **2** but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world. **3** He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power. After making purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high,

There's no consensus on who wrote the book of Hebrews. Some Bible scholars think it was Paul, others disagree. But scholars all agree that this writer was an expert in Jewish law and history and that he tied the book in perfectly with the gospel.

He begins by linking the Old Testament to the New: long ago, God spoke through His prophets; now, He speaks through His Son. The prophets of the Old Testament were the men who spoke God's messages to people. Many associate prophecy with the telling of the future, and sometimes prophets did just that. But they also spoke of judgment, instruction, conviction, or any other word that God needed His people to hear.

⇒ **What are some of the important messages God spoke through His prophets that relate to Jesus?**

God spoke "at many times and in many ways." He used nature, dreams, symbolism, and all kinds of messages from the mouths of these prophets. God was not confined to any particular type of delivery; He could do what He wanted. For that reason, He had every right to send His greatest message in the form of a human: Jesus, His only Son. We can learn all we really need to know about God's character and nature in observing Jesus. Studying the Gospels gives us the clearest answer to the question "Who is God really?"

- ⇒ **Who is God really to you?**
- ⇒ **How does God speak to you today?**

Since God is the Sovereign Lord and King of everything, He has the divine right to use His authority. God the Father has given all authority to God the Son. He appointed Jesus as the "heir of all things," the only One who has authority over that which He created.

In John 10:30, Jesus said, "I and the Father are one." In John 14:9, He said, "The one who has seen me has seen the Father." The author of Hebrews confirms these two statements in verse 3, "He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature." The concept of radiance holds in it an idea of brightness, splendor, and glory.

We see this truth from John's Gospel, that the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen His glory, the glory as of the Son from the Father (John 1:14). Our Hebrews author next explains that Jesus is "the exact expression of His nature." The Greek word for "expression" points to an instrument used for engraving, carving, or stamping a figure. God has an identity, and that very character is etched, stamped, or engraved in Jesus.

- ⇒ **How does Jesus perfectly reflect God?**
- ⇒ **What does your reflection of Jesus say about His Father?**

As if all that weren't enough, Jesus Himself stepped into our skin, took our sin upon Himself, and allowed His own body to become our perfect sacrifice once and for all, purifying us before the Father. He perfectly revealed that God so loved the world, dying so that we might live forever with Him.

Jesus deserves our worship, our attention, and our praise. He shines the glory of God, He is the very nature of God, and He maintains the universe. And while we live in this world and must function in it, we should never lose sight of the One who created all there is, keeps it all moving

with His powerful word, walked into sacrificial death for His ungrateful creation, and sat down on the throne next to the Father.

- ⇒ **What can you do to turn your eyes to Jesus every single day?**
- ⇒ **How should the truth of these verses shape your personal worship time?**

TRANSFORM

Jesus's divinity is revealed in His works, His claims, and in His very nature. The Son of God took on flesh and became fully human without compromise of His deity. As the God-Man, Jesus lived a sinless life and paid the sin debt owed by people. Jesus has fully revealed God's glory to humanity, being God Himself. Because Jesus is God, we live in full submission to Him, not only turning to Him in faith as our Savior but following Him in obedience as our Lord.

- ⇒ **Discuss this quote: Looking at Christ is the way we see most fully the glory of God. No human son is the exact representation of his father. There is a close relation, but not an exact representation. Christ, however, is an "exact representation." He and God are of the same divine essence.**
– R. Albert Mohler Jr.

1. Head: Some people think of God the Father and picture a cloud, judgment, lightning, and power. They think of God the Son and see love, compassion, and meekness. But the Bible reveals that the Father and Son are one, proven throughout the narrative of God's interaction with humanity. Our knowledge of God through the Bible is the only way we can believe Jesus' words that He and the Father are one. As you read through your Bible, mark each name, character, or description of God and Jesus. Ask the Lord to help you know and believe who He really is.

- ⇒ **What attributes of Jesus's deity comfort you the most, and why?**

2. Heart: There's much to love about Jesus, and for good reason. He perfectly revealed the love of the Father as He touched, healed, provided, and taught. But sometimes we see only the love of Jesus and miss the fact that He is also Lord, the ultimate authority. When we focus on the love of Jesus and miss His authority, we don't live in willful obedience.

- ⇒ **As you consider the truths of this week's passages, consider how your feelings toward Jesus affect your obedience to Him. Are you following Him as Shepherd?**
- ⇒ **How can you praise Jesus for His divine work in your life?**

3. Hands: In every single aspect of His life, Jesus pointed to the Father. His radiance, His perfect reflection, allowed everyone to see who God is and how much He loves. We can't perfectly imitate God as Jesus did. His perfection is unmatched. But we're still called to reflect God. We are "being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another" (2 Corinthians 3:18). Consider your spiritual maturity and ability to reveal God in your own words, actions, attitudes, faith, and hope. We want our lives to be a mirror to God so all the world can see Him.

- ⇒ **How is your life pointing others to Jesus, and thus to the Father?**

The Gospel Project® for Adults

- Leader Guide CSB, Unit 22, Session 5
- Daily Discipleship Guide, Unit 22, Session 5

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Resources used, compiled from, and quoted:

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6. <https://www.gotquestions.org/Feast-of-Dedication.html>. Available online 3.28.25.