

Are You The Christ? Tell Us Plainly!

Time has elapsed since Christ's confrontation with the Jewish religious leaders. The confrontation occurred because He had healed a man who was blind from birth. This proved to be a major event. The apostle John devoted a great amount of discussion to the incident, about one and a half chapters. A majority of the religious leaders refused to believe the miracle because it proved that Christ was sent by the Father and was in fact God. Yet, a minority of the religious leaders did believe because of Christ's miracles. Now the religious leaders have found Him again and surrounded Him in order to ask, "Are You the Christ?" Jesus' reply was incredible. It shocked and angered them. What you will discover may shock you too! Many today are just like the majority of the religious leaders of Christ's time. They refuse to believe Jesus' miracles were real because then they would have to admit that He is God. Then they would have to respond to the truth that Jesus Christ is God. How would you have responded? Our study is from John 10:22-30.

FEAST OF DEDICATION. Our study begins with John 10:22 where we are told the Feast of Dedication had been celebrated in the city of Jerusalem. Today, the Feast of Dedication is called Hanukkah or the Feast of Lights. The Hebrew word for dedication is *hanukkah*. That is why the feast is also called Hanukkah. The feast celebrates the restoration of the temple in Jerusalem after Antiochus Epiphanes was defeated. Antiochus ruled as a Grecian king from 175 to 164 B.C. Earlier Antiochus had conquered the city about 168

B.C. and then polluted the temple by sacrificing a pig on the altar, installing a pagan altar and setting up a statue of Zeus in the Holy of Holies (Daniel 11:31). When Antiochus Epiphanes was defeated in 165 B.C., the temple was cleaned

and rededicated (see 2 Maccabees 10:1-8 for a description). Today the feast remembers the victory and the re-dedication of the temple.

At that time the Feast of the Dedication took place at Jerusalem; it was winter, and Jesus was walking in the portico of Solomon. John 10:22-23 (NASB)

Verses 22-23 state that the time of the Feast of Dedication had arrived. According to the Jewish calendar, this feast occurred on the 25th day in the Hebrew month of Chislev (November - December). It was a colder time of the year and the feast lasted for eight days.



The lower average temperatures in Jerusalem in modern times in November/December vary from the low 30s to the lower 40s in Fahrenheit degrees (-1.1 to -4.4 Celsius). On rare occasions it snows.

We have been told the time of

the year, the celebration that was occurring, and now we are told that Jesus was walking in the portico of the temple. The portico of Solomon's temple was along the east side of the

wall of the temple.

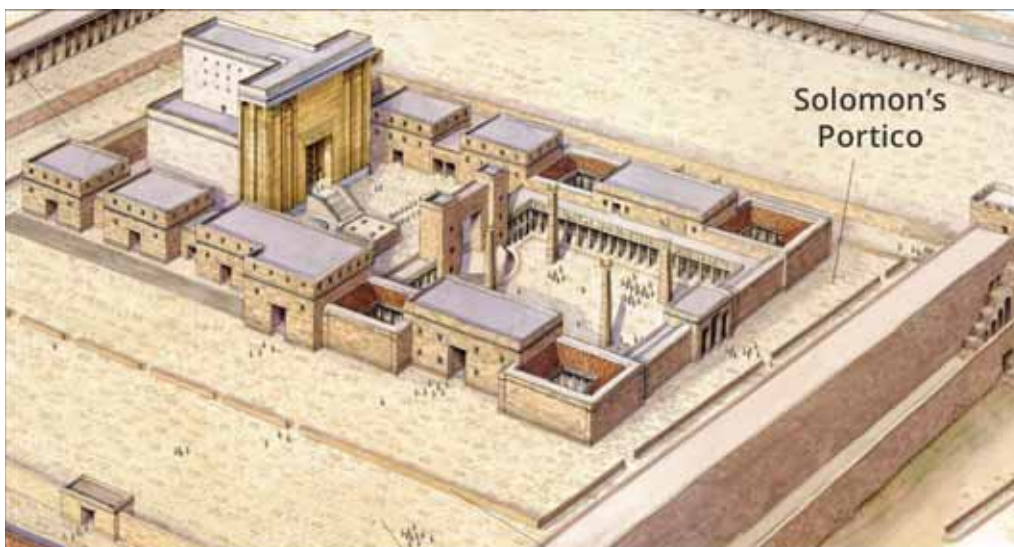
ARE YOU THE CHRIST? TELL US PLAINLY! As Jesus was walking alongside the temple, the Jewish religious leaders surrounded Him and started asking questions.

The Jews then gathered around Him, and were saying to Him, "How long will You keep us in suspense? If You are the Christ, tell us plainly." John 10:24 (NASB)

The Greek word for surrounded is *kykloo*. It literally means to circle around. There were enough Jewish leaders so that they could circle around Jesus. This must have been very impressive to anyone watching. Jesus was in the center of a circle of men. This was a planned confrontation. The Greek tense of the word "saying" is in the imperfect which means they were repeatedly asking. They all probably joined in the questioning. They were aggressive and wanted a clear statement from Christ.

The question they asked is not a surprise since Jesus had not yet directly told them that He was the Christ. He did tell the woman at the well that He was the Christ (John 4:25-26). Yet, one would think that the Pharisees would have heard such incredible news from among the "common people." John 7:31, 41 reveals that the Jewish crowds were already wondering if Jesus was the Christ. John 6-9 strongly suggests that Judah and Jerusalem were abuzz with speculation even though the religious leaders had warned the people to not

declare that Jesus was the Christ (John 9:22). The gospels never record that Jesus said to them, "I am the Christ." The gospels record that He declared He was the Christ only



Solomon's Temple and Portico

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one time – to the woman in Samaria.

Therefore, they asked Him very directly, "If you are the Christ, tell us plainly." In the Greek there are four types of "if" statements. Here the religious leaders used a first class "if" statement. They literally said, "If you are the Christ, and we know that that is what you are hinting! Then tells us plainly." This reveals they believed that He was claiming to be the Messiah, but He had never plainly used those words with them. The Greek word that is translated as "plainly" is *parresia* and it just means to speak with boldness, to be candid or to have freedom of speech. We would say "be blunt." This suggests that the religious leaders suspected that Jesus was communicating He was the Christ, but He was not bold enough to actually make the statement. They knew He was claiming to be the Christ, but they wanted to hear Him openly say the words because they wanted solid grounds for murdering Him. This helps us understand Jesus' next statement.

MY WORKS TESTIFY OF ME. Notice that Christ told them that He had already answered their question.

Jesus answered them, "I told you, and you do not believe; the works that I do in My Father's name, these testify of Me." John 10:25 (NASB)

Even though Christ said that He had already told them, we must not take Jesus' comment to mean that He had literally

said, "I am the Christ." If He did, there is no record of it in the gospels. It also seems highly unlikely that the gospel authors would have not included such an incredible statement

from Christ.

It seems that Christ is simply saying, "I have already given you every reason to understand that I am the Christ." When He says that His works prove He is the Christ, He was saying that the works He did through the Father reveal His teachings and statements were true. For example, in John 5:1-16 Jesus healed a blind man and then He told the religious leaders,

My Father is working until now, and I Myself am working. John 5:17 (NASB)

Verse 18 reveals that they understood Jesus had claimed to be God. In reply Jesus said that whatever God the Father does, He does (v.19-23). He stated that He gives eternal life (v. 24-25). That is a gift that only God can give. Just as the Father is self-existing, He is self-existing (v. 26). He will be the Judge on judgment day (v. 27-29). Only God will be the judge on judgment day. In verses 33-47, Jesus stated that John the Baptist, His own works, God the Father, the Scriptures, and Moses all testify of Him. Jesus' message was simple. Jesus was and is God.

Now those words did not describe the Messiah that the Jewish religious leaders expected. They expected a military leader who would defeat

their enemies and give them a kingdom. But the message of the Scriptures was the Messiah would not only accomplish what they wished, but He would be God too! Psalm 2:7-12, Isaiah 7:14, 9:6, and Micah 5:2-3 reveal that He would be God. John 6:32-5 and 7:14-30 also echoed His deity. He was everything that they had been looking forward to plus more.

Therefore, Jesus said,

"I told you, and you do not believe; the works that I do in My Father's name, these testify of Me." John 10:25 (NASB)

But He had not yet said the words, "I am the Christ" to them. Notice His statement, ". . . the works that I do in My Father's name, these testify of Me" connects back to the passages we just looked at. Christ had made all the correct claims and His miracles, signs and wonders proved it.

THE REASON THEY DID NOT BELIEVE. But they did not believe. Why? Jesus explained in verse 26 that they were not of "My sheep."

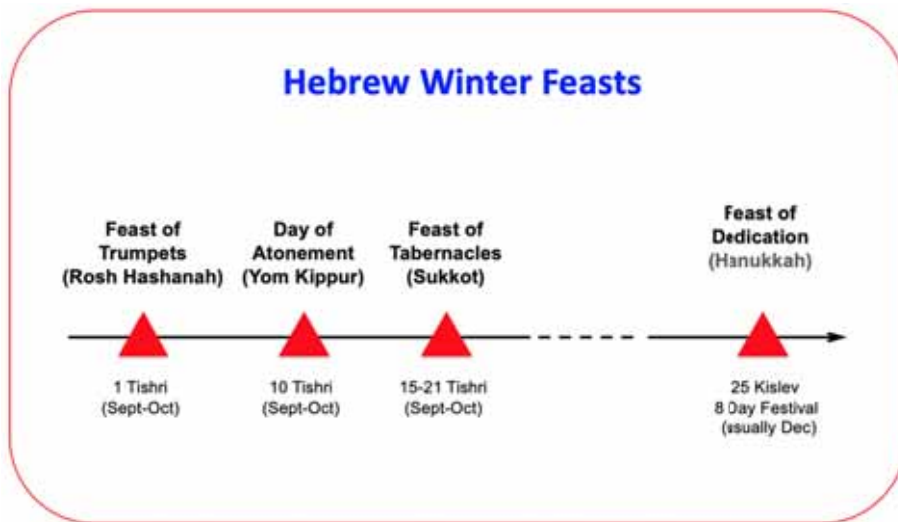
But you do not believe because you are not of My sheep. John 10:26 (NASB)

He did not mean that they were not Jews who lived in Israel. He did not mean that they were not Christians because they were not believing in Him. The answer is that they did not believe (v. 26) because they were not of His sheep. Jesus

reveals He owns the sheep. They do not believe because He does not own them. Ownership came before belief.

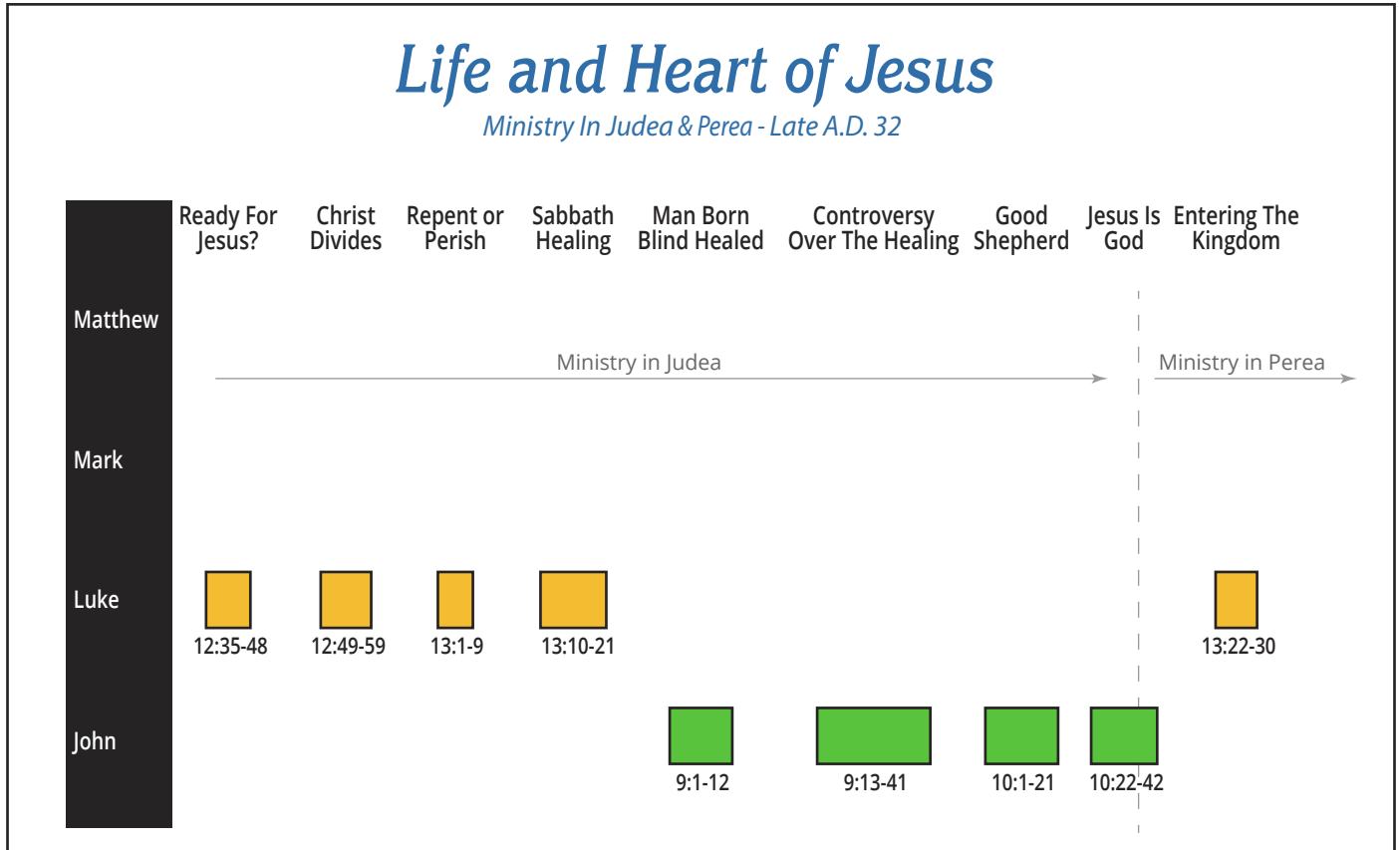
Many Christians struggle with human responsibility and divine sovereignty or the subject of predestination. A woman once asked if I

believed that God chose people to believe. I could sense that she was not going to like my answer. Sadly, she did not want me to explain my answer after I said, "Yes!" I would have encouraged her to think about the apostle Paul who was traveling on the Damascus Road to imprison Christians. He hated Christians and did not believe in Christ. He was anti-Christian and wanted to erase Christianity from the



Life and Heart of Jesus

Ministry In Judea & Perea - Late A.D. 32



face of the earth. But then in Acts 9:1-6 we are told that Jesus appeared to Paul in a bright light and told him to get up and to enter Damascus and Paul obeyed. The appearance of Christ was not Paul's idea. The command that he heard was not his idea. He was not interested in sharing the gospel. That was not his wish, but it was Christ's plan for his life. Later in Acts 26:12-18, Paul gives King Agrippa a fuller explanation about what happened. Here are verses 14-18.

And when we had all fallen to the ground, I heard a voice saying to me in the Hebrew dialect, "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me? It is hard for you to kick against the goads." And I said, "Who are You, Lord?" And the Lord said, "I am Jesus whom you are persecuting. But get up and stand on your feet; for this purpose I have appeared to you, to appoint you a minister and a witness not only to the things which you have seen, but also to the things in which I will appear to you; rescuing you from the Jewish people and from the Gentiles, to whom I am sending you, to open their eyes so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the dominion of Satan to God, that they may receive

forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who have been sanctified by faith in Me." Acts 26:14-18 (NASB)

Notice that Christ told Paul he was appointed a minister and witness and, therefore, he was going to be sharing the gospel to the Gentiles. This was not Paul's original idea. Remember that Paul was going to Damascus to imprison Christians (Acts 9:1-2). He hated Christians and he had rejected Christ. He was not trying to become a Christian. He was trying to stop Christians from sharing the gospel.

This is an example of God implementing His plan and changing Paul's heart. It is example of divine sovereignty or predestination and Paul had the responsibility to yield. This was not Paul's idea. What occurred was God's idea. Paul believed and served Christ because that was God's plan. As a result of God's action, Paul had an incredible passion to preach about Jesus Christ and he did.

Another example of human responsibility and divine sovereignty working together is the unbelieving disciple called Judas. In Luke 22:22 Jesus stated that Judas was going to

betray Him because it had been planned or *determined*. Yet, Judas was responsible for his decision to betray Him. This pattern of human responsibility and divine sovereignty is repeated throughout Scripture.

Romans 9:14-18 is another important example of God's predetermined plan and human responsibility.

What shall we say then? There is no injustice with God, is there? May it never be! For He says to Moses, "I WILL HAVE MERCY ON WHOM I HAVE MERCY, AND I WILL HAVE COMPASSION ON WHOM I HAVE COMPASSION." So then it does not depend on the man who wills or the man who runs, but on God who has mercy. For the Scripture says to Pharaoh, "FOR THIS VERY PURPOSE I RAISED YOU UP, TO DEMONSTRATE MY POWER IN YOU, AND THAT MY NAME MIGHT BE PROCLAIMED THROUGHOUT THE WHOLE EARTH." So then He has mercy on whom He desires, and He hardens whom He desires. Romans 9:14-18 (NASB)

Here the apostle Paul states that we have no right to question God's justice or mercy if He hardens some and grants mercy to others. Only God understands why some Jewish leaders believed and others did not believe. What is clear is that they were not part of His sheep. They were not predestined to believe. We certainly do not understand how God's actions are just, but we can trust that He is holy and He understands. What we do know is that anyone who wants to believe will be saved. 1 John 1:12 and John 3:16 are still true.

In Romans 8:29-30 and Ephesians 1:3-8, we are told that God chooses people to be saved. The explanation some Christians give is that God looked ahead into the distant future to discover who would believe in Christ if given the opportunity and then predestined to be saved those who would respond. This does not explain what happened to the apostle Paul on the Damascus Road. Paul was not given an offer. He was given a command.

Ezra 1:1 and Proverbs 21:1 state that God moves the hearts of kings and countless other people to accomplish what He wishes. The fulfillment of prophecy requires God to forcefully move men and beasts to accomplish His will. John 6:65, 44, 37 reveal God's sovereign control of salvation

as well as, and not just in fulfillment of prophecy. The sovereign hand of God is observable all through Scripture.

Prayer is another example of divine sovereignty. When is the last time that you asked God to cause someone to do something? How does God change a heart in your favor or orchestrate a sequence of events? Does God hope and try to accomplish your prayers? Is your request only going to be answered if before the foundation of the world He determined the person would change and therefore God allowed you to ask the question?

Jesus' message was simple. They did not believe because they were not chosen to believe and their sinful hearts would not have believed on their own (Romans 3:11-12).

THE RESPONSE OF THE ELECT. Then Jesus repeated the statement that He had made earlier that His sheep hear His voice.

But you do not believe because you are not of My sheep. My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me . . . John 10:26-27 (NASB)

The statements Christ made in verses 26 and 27 are truly remarkable. In verse 26 the people did not believe because they never belonged to Christ. In verse 27 since the sheep did belong to Christ, they would believe, listen and follow. That is what the Holy Spirit said in Ephesians 1:4.

. . . just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and blameless before Him . . . Ephesians 1:4 (NASB)

The sheep belong to Christ because He selected them. Jesus did not own them because they decided to believe Him and follow Him (verse 27).

John 6:65, 44 and 37 explain that they come because the Father allows them to come to Christ. Then He draws them and verse 37 says that they will come to Christ.

And He was saying, "For this reason I have said to you, that no one can come to Me unless it has been granted him from the Father." John 6:65 (NASB)

No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up on the last day. John 6:44 (NASB)

All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will certainly not cast out. John 6:37 (NASB)

They come because the Father draws them. Acts 13:48 explains why His sheep respond to His voice.

When the Gentiles heard this, they began rejoicing and glorifying the word of the Lord; and as many as had been appointed to eternal life believed. Acts 13:48 (NASB)

Yet, John 1:12 says that anyone who wants to receive Christ can come.

THE SALVATION OF THE ELECT. Then Jesus added,

... and I give eternal life to them, and they will never perish ...
John 10:28a (NASB)

Jesus makes two promises in this statement. First, He gives eternal life to His sheep. Second, they will never perish. In John 3:16 Jesus makes the same two promises but in reverse order. First, He promised that they will never perish. He means that they will never go to hell.

The second promise is that they will have eternal life. This does not refer to living forever because Matthew 25:46 reveals that everyone lives eternally. The only question is where will they live – hell or heaven? Eternal life refers to one's quality of life – life in heaven. Eternal life starts at the moment one believes in Christ for the forgiveness of one's sins. Eternal life does not start when one dies. In this statement Jesus gave us two promises: we will not go to hell and we will go to heaven. Eternal life starts at the moment of saving faith and continues throughout eternity. The faith that He gives us is a gift (Acts 3:16; Ephesians 2:8-9). That means eternal life is a gift too (Romans 6:23; Ephesians 2:8-9).

THE SECURITY OF THE ELECT. Notice that the two promises are actually a promise that once a person believes in Christ, that person is going to heaven. The promise becomes

effective at the moment of saving faith. This also reveals that once a person is saved, they will remain saved forever. Jesus said they *follow Me!* The Greek word for follow is in the present tense meaning continuous ongoing activity.

Then Jesus strengthened the two promises with a third promise.

... and no one will snatch them out of My hand. 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. John 10:28-29 (NASB)

The Greek word that Jesus used for "snatch" is *harpazo*. It has the sense of taking "something by force." It is used in 2 Corinthians 12:2, 4 of Paul being taken up to heaven and in Jude 23 to refer to snatching people out of the fires of hell.

The Greek word for "no" in verse 28 is a double negative, making the statement "no one will snatch" very strong. That is, it is impossible for anyone to remove a Christian from Christ's hand.

Then Jesus speaks of the Father. He states that every Christian was given to Him by the Father and no one can snatch them out of the Father's hand either. Once again Jesus refers to the mystery of election and human responsibility. God the Father chooses men and women and gives them to Christ. Choosing is the activity of selecting and not one of observing and hoping some will believe.

The reason that no one can snatch a Christian out of the Father's hand is that He is greater than all – everything invisible and visible. Therefore, no one can deny a Christian the promises given to them at the moment of saving faith or salvation. No one can snatch a Christian out of Christ's hand or the Father's hand. Imagine someone trying to deny a Christian their promise of eternal salvation when both Christ and the Father are protecting them? The message is simple. No one can frustrate Christ's promise and the Father's will.

But some want us to believe that a Christian can lose their salvation by jumping out of the hands of both Christ and the Father. Such a claim truly reveals a low view of God's power and assumes that someone else has greater power. Those who make such a claim reveal they do not understand

that this is a guarantee from Christ which depends upon the promise of Christ and the power of the Father. Jesus did not say that most people cannot snatch themselves out of God's hand. He did not say that if someone tries extremely hard, they can jump out of His and the Father's hand. He did not say that one or two could do this. Jesus did not say that some sheep can decide to remove themselves from His flock and no longer be sheep. The truth is sheep are owned by the shepherd. Sheep do not select their owner!

When Christ said that "no one is able to snatch," He included every true Christian, including you. This is one of the strongest statements in the Bible regarding the eternal security of a Christian. Since God chose you to be saved, how can anyone undo what God has done? Christ is giving every real Christian a promise of security.

I AND THE FATHER ARE ONE. Then Jesus strengthened the promise of eternal security one more time by saying that He and the Father are one.

[I and the Father are one. John 10:30 \(NASB\)](#)

Some false religions and most cults teach that the word "one" in this verse refers to two or more people being one in agreement. That is, they claim that Christ agrees with the Father. But the Greek word for "one" is *heis*. The word is the cardinal number for one or the digit for 1. That is, it is the number 1 in the series 1, 2, 3, 4, etc. Jesus claimed to be identical with God the Father—one! Later in Christ's ministry, He will clearly say that if anyone sees Him that person has seen the Father. That is a clear claim that He was and is identical to the Father.

[. . . He who has seen Me has seen the Father; how can you say, "Show us the Father"?](#) John 14:9 (NASB)

Then Christ continued, stating two times that He was in the Father and the Father was in Him.

[Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father is in Me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on My own initiative, but the Father abiding in Me does His works. Believe Me](#)

[that I am in the Father and the Father is in Me; otherwise believe because of the works themselves. John 14:10-11 \(NASB\)](#)

In John 17:21 Jesus repeated that He was in the Father and the Father was in Him.

[. . . that they may all be one; even as You, Father, are in Me and I in You . . . John 17:21 \(NASB\)](#)

The testimony of Scripture is loud and clear that Christ was and is God. When we look ahead to the next two verses, we will discover that the Jews understood that Christ was claiming to be God when He said that He and the Father are one. If Christ had only said that He was God, then He would have claimed to be identical to the Father. But that would not have been the truth. He was not the Father. Since our one God is a trinity, the only way He could have made the claim that He was God was to say that He was in the Father and the Father was in Him. In this verse Christ revealed that God was a trinity. He was one member of this plural-unity.

CONCLUSION. In our study the religious leaders asked Jesus to tell them plainly if He was the Christ. We have discovered that the religious leaders were not serious seekers after truth. They were not seeking the Messiah, the Christ or God. Their question was a trap. They had seen His miracles, signs and wonders. They had heard Him teach and they rejected the signs and, consequently, Him. If Christ had plainly said that He was the Christ, they would have seized upon His statement as proof that He deserved death.

Once again He avoided a word-for-word statement that He was the Christ. The reply that Jesus gave them was more significant. He claimed to be God. The next two verses will tell us that the religious leaders then wanted to kill Him.

What about you? How do you respond to Christ's teachings, miracles, signs and wonders? No one else in history has done what He did. Ancient non-Christian writers claimed that He did miracles. Pontius Pilate wrote that Christ did miracles. As a result of Christ's phenomenal works and teachings, Christianity exploded into the largest worldwide faith, not religion, in the world. Christianity provides a relationship with God as opposed to a religion of ritual and a

cold and indifferent deity. What about you? Christ claimed that He was and is our God. Do you reject His claim? If you reject Him, then He will reject you on judgment day.

Christ offers us eternal life if we believe in Him, repent of our sins and yield our lives to Him.

. . . that if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved; for with the heart a person believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation. For the Scripture says, "WHOEVER BELIEVES IN HIM

WILL NOT BE DISAPPOINTED." For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; for the same Lord is Lord of all, abounding in riches for all who call on Him; for "WHOEVER WILL CALL ON THE NAME OF THE LORD WILL BE SAVED."
Romans 10:9-13 (NASB)

If you desire to know that you have eternal life, tell God that you are a sinner and want to stop sinning. Tell Him that you would like Him to forgive your sins and give you eternal life as a gift. Then close by asking Him to take control over your life.