

Dr. David Turner, Gospel of John, Session 12, John 10:1-42

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This is Dr. David Turner in his teaching on the Gospel of John. This is session 12, Tense Times in Jerusalem, The Good Shepherd, John 10:1-42.

Hello, in this video we're doing a study of John 10, following up on our study we just completed of Jesus healing the blind man, and looking at chapter 10, which is commonly known as the Good Shepherd Discourse.

So, as we have typically been doing, we're just going to follow the flow of the narrative for a bit and look at the way the story unfolds. Then we'll come back and revisit some key areas in the story. So, as we look at John chapter 10, we're still looking at what scholars have called the Feast Cycle in the Gospel of John.

This would probably be the last chapter that's involved with that. And we begin still flowing from the earlier narrative of the Feast of Booths, the Feast of Tabernacles, Sukkot. And the first part of the chapter, I guess we would say from verses 1 to 21, is just a dispute going on between Jesus and the Jewish leaders, and he's basically still teaching them.

So, we have these alternating patterns of Jesus giving some sort of an allegorical discourse, as we'll see eventually here in this lecture, what exactly he was doing, whether a parable, whether a figure of speech, whether an allegory. We can debate that question, and we will do a bit in the moments ahead. But he is speaking figuratively of himself, using metaphors to describe himself.

And he first speaks then of the thief, the shepherd, the sheep, and the stranger in verses 1 to 5. Then his audience, verse 6, a little bit of an editorial remark about it, they didn't get it. They didn't follow what he was teaching. Then he spoke, even in a more extended way, about the faithful shepherd, contrasting the faithful shepherd with the hired hand.

In all this material, there is this overall understanding of course that Jesus is describing himself as the good shepherd, and all the derogatory terms for the thief and the robber and the hired hand contrast him and his true concern for Israel with that of the religious leaders with whom he has been debating. He's styling them as the negative features in the allegory. So, the upshot of the second section of it, where he contrasts himself as the faithful shepherd to the religious leaders as the hired hand, the result of all that in verses 19 and 20, is once again, as we've seen ever since Jesus has arrived in Jerusalem in chapter 7, a division amongst the audience.

So, the Jews who heard these words, according to 10:19, were again divided. Many of them said he's demon-possessed and raving mad. Why listen to him? So, some of them were just totally not so much in disagreement with Jesus.

They just thought he was talking nonsense. They could not even get into it at all. So, they said basically he's loony.

Others, verse 21 said, these are not the sayings of a man possessed by a demon. Can a demon open the eyes of the blind? So here we have in chapter 10 a link back to chapter 9. And if we hadn't already realized it, we notice as chapter 10 starts, there's chapter 10 starts in verse 1, there is no real transitional statement to the effect that the next day or the next week or later on or something, we run directly from chapter 9 into chapter 10. And so, we have Jesus basically saying to the same Pharisees in 10:1 what he just said in 9:41 about their blindness.

So, the chapter begins on a rather negative note, just spilling over from chapter 9. And if you didn't understand that already, the remark of some of Jesus' audience in chapter 10, verse 21, can a demon-possessed man open the eyes of the blind? They were saying, of course not, that's a rhetorical question, but they expected a negative answer to it. So, this is the first part of the chapter as it really concludes everything that we've been reading from chapter 7 chronologically about Jesus visiting Jerusalem during the Feast of Tabernacles. We have a chronological shift right at this point because we're told in chapter 10 and verse 22, then came the festival of dedication at Jerusalem.

The festival of dedication is Hanukkah, the dedication of the temple. We could call it, I guess, the rededication of the temple during the intertestamental period in the 160s BCE, the Seleucid king Antiochus Epiphanes had attempted to forcefully convert the Jews to basically pagan ideas. Some of the Jews had gone along, but the Hasmoneans, often called the Maccabees, revolted and so were able to establish their own kingdom eventually as opposed to the Seleucid dynasty.

So, part of Antiochus Epiphanes' persecution of the Jews was the desecration of the temple and he had eventually even sacrificed a pig on the altar according to Maccabees. Josephus also speaks of these matters. So, when the Jewish people were able to regain their temple, they rededicated the temple and there is a legend about a miraculous preservation of one flask of oil to take care of the entire time before more richly pure oil was able to be procured.

So, that miracle, the Feast of Lights, and Hanukkah, all comes from that period of time. Hanukkah, as we probably know in modern times, is a holiday that typically comes late in the year around December. Sukkot is a fall holiday, so there are a couple of months to say the least, roughly speaking, perhaps more, between the

time of the first part of John 10 and the transition that occurs into 10.22. In fact, the text tells us in the last words of verse 22, it was winter.

So, we have in this second part of the chapter, I'm saying we have three heated exchanges. One of them is rather short, but it doesn't lack anger on the part of the audience. So, we're told in 10.23, Jesus was in the temple courts walking in Solomon's colonnade.

This would have probably been along the perimeter of the court of the Gentiles, a porch, a colonnade, an area where it was a covered walkway with pillars. As you may recall from the Book of Acts, this is a meeting place of the early Christians there as well, often just called Solomon's Porch. And you may have been familiar with this term, Solomon's Porch.

I see lots of churches these days calling themselves Solomon's Porch Church, trying to portray themselves as being open to discussion and debate and being a welcoming church to discuss various ideas. So as Jesus was walking along in Solomon's Porch, the Jews who were there gathered around him were saying, how long will you keep us in suspense? If you're the Messiah, tell us plainly. So, they're basically challenging him, not unlike the people in John 6 did, when they said, if you're really the Messiah, just show us a sign.

And Jesus answers them here in verse 25 like he did his audience in chapter 6. I think a similar thing happens in chapter 8, by saying, I've already told you, I did tell you, but you didn't believe. The works I do in my Father's name testify about me. So this takes us back five chapters to Jesus' very first time dialoguing with the Jewish leaders in Jerusalem, where he speaks about the testimonies to him.

The works I do in my Father's name testify about me, but you don't believe, because you are not my sheep, taking us back then to the first part of this discourse. So we have again the recollection then here at Hanukkah of what Jesus has recently taught a few months earlier at the Feast of Booths. This is an allusion to the Good Shepherd discourse.

So, Jesus picks up on that theme in verse 26, and continues in 27, my sheep listen to my voice. I know them and they follow me. I give to them eternal life.

They shall never perish. No one will snatch them out of my hand. My Father who has given them to me is greater than all.

No one can snatch them out of my Father's hand. I and the Father are one. So, here's Jesus' half of the first dispute, and now they respond to this by picking up stones to stone him.

We've obviously seen this happen already in the Gospel of John, and Jesus then says to them, what's up with this? Why do you want to stone me? I've shown you many good works from the Father. You've asked me to show you if I'm the Messiah. I've told you why I am.

Now why are you stoning me? They replied in verse 33, not stoning you for any good works, but because you have a mere man claiming to be God. So whether this is technically what we ought to call blasphemy or not, it certainly is a sort of slander in their view that Jesus is claiming to be divine, claiming to be God, and so this is a very negative thing to them. So, the final dispute in the chapter pretty much begins here in verse 34.

Jesus, in reply to them, defends himself from Scripture, citing Psalm 82, which in itself is a challenging psalm to understand, and Jesus' citation of it brings up a very interesting way of interpreting it that we'll talk about later in the video, but the point being here simply is that he's defending himself from the Bible, and he even says, is it not written in your law? So don't bug me about it. This is something that you claim you believe in. So, we're dealing with the same sort of thing here we had back in chapter 5 when Jesus is subverting their authority by saying to them, you think you get Moses, but you don't because Moses got me, so you don't really get Moses.

So, what he's saying here then in chapter 10, verse 34 if you had really understood the law, you would understand me because the types of things I'm doing are supported by the Scriptures and what you're doing is not. An interesting point here in verse 34 is that he says, is it not written in your law, but he's quoting the Psalms. So obviously the Hebrew Bible is divided into the Torah, Nevi'im, and Ketuvim, but in a sense, all of the Tanakh, the Torah, Nevi'im, Ketuvim, the whole of the Testament is viewed as having legal authority, and so perhaps that's why he refers to the Psalms here as the law.

So, Jesus essentially gets into a lesser to greater argument. We'll get into this in more detail, and he's saying you have this verse in Psalm 82 that evidently refers to human beings or perhaps angels as gods, so why are you mad at me if I said I'm the son of God? You don't have a problem with that Scripture, why do you have a problem with me? Argument from the lesser to the greater. So, in response to this, in verse 39, they tried to seize him, but he escaped from their grasp.

I think that's how we noticed earlier chapters ending, for instance, chapter 8. So, this is just building up and the Jewish leaders continue to attempt to arrest Jesus, and he either by supernatural power or just by cleverness is able to avoid what they're trying to do to him. So, when we look at the linkage of chapter 10 to chapter 9, and try to follow the contextual flow here, we don't really understand why we have to have a new chapter here. Sometimes the chapter divisions in the Bible are well put and do show a departure, a new topic, other times they sort of get in the way.

I think this is one of the latter, unfortunately, it sort of gets in the way. Because in chapter 10 we have just a continuation of what's been going on in Jesus' conversation with the Pharisees in chapter 9, so we should probably read chapter 10, verse 1, if you will, as chapter 9, verse 42, but there aren't 42 verses in chapter 9, there's only 41. When we read this discourse with this in mind and in this context, we have to acknowledge that this is not so much a warm and fuzzy thing with a nice image, perhaps, of a little lamb and a little child hugging it or something like that.

That's all well and good, and we are certainly appreciative of God's pastoral concern for us as his sheep. We're aware of how this theme permeates the Bible in texts like Psalm 23, and many others. Unfortunately, in the narrative flow of John, this is not a warm and fuzzy text, it's a hot and jagged text, or maybe I should say it's a cold and jagged text.

Because Jesus is not giving the Pharisees a hug here, unfortunately. He's shoving them aside because they are not accepting who he says he is. So, the Good Shepherd discourse is not here so much to extol the wonderful faithfulness of God and his tender care for his sheep as it is to accuse the religious leaders of not being the kind of shepherds that they ought to be for the people of God.

So, this is more of a prophetic critique of the religious leaders of Israel than it is a pastoral homily or a pastoral text to comfort the people of God. This is not to say that when we look at this text in its context, we can't find a great deal of comfort in it. We certainly can, but we have to balance that with the sad rebellion of the religious leaders against the word, teaching, and deeds of Jesus here.

Notice that it's a very sad text in many ways, despite the joy that we can find when we apply it to ourselves as the people of God. So this text then is a negative text in many ways. Another thing about the text that we need to think about here is how it might apply back to chapter 9. If we think about the blind man in chapter 9 whom Jesus healed and then led to a fuller knowledge of himself, then this man in chapter 9 who was so ill-treated by the religious leaders and thrown out of the synagogue, we can't help but understand him as one of the sheep that chapter 10 is speaking about who have not been treated well by the false shepherds, by the hired hands, by the thieves and the robbers.

So, we said here that the blind man who now sees is an example of a sheep who's been abandoned by the hired hand when the thieves come, and now Jesus is going to grab him and bring him into his flock, and no one is able to snatch him out of Jesus and his father's hands.

The next thing we want to think about after we've thought about the contextual tie-in of John 10 is what is Jesus doing with this whole discourse that we call the Good

Shepherd saying? What sort of literary device is this? What genre is this material? So, we have lots of debates going on in New Testament studies about whether the gospel of John has parables in it or not. Many people confidently say that one difference between the synoptic tradition and the Johannine tradition is that John does not contain parables, whereas the synoptic gospels Matthew, Mark, and Luke are replete with parables.

So, what is going on here in John 10? We could bring alongside this while we're thinking along these lines John 15, the true vine allegory that Jesus has there. So, is this a parable or not? How do we understand this in light of the synoptic parables? Well, just looking at the first chunk of it, it seems like what we have would be 10, 1 through 5, would be the parable, the figure of speech, whatever term you want to use for it. Then Jesus has something of a, the editor basically has a little comment about it in verse 6, and then we have Jesus giving you some interpretation about what he's just been saying in verse 7 and following.

So, when we find something like this in the synoptic gospels when we have parables, often they are introduced with Jesus saying something like, the kingdom of heaven shall be like a nun too, or the kingdom of heaven is like. Often after giving a parable, Jesus will say something to the effect, just as this, so also that. So, he's drawing a comparison, an extended analogy between elements in the parable and elements that they speak to.

You may be familiar with the old saying that a parable is an earthly story with a heavenly meaning. There's a lot of truth in that, I think, and a lot of help to be found. We don't have that sort of language here in John 10.

Jesus says nothing about the kingdom of heaven is likened unto anything, but it's as if he had because there might be something here pretty much to the effect Jesus might have said, my relationship to you and my relationship to Israel is like a shepherd's relationship to sheep. And he might have said something like the Pharisaic leadership of Israel and the chief priests are like the hired hand, are like the thieves. And he might have put it in that way.

So even though we don't have the same external trappings that we find in the Synoptic Gospels for what we are told there are the parables, we have an extended comparison being drawn using this sort of language because this is how we as human beings think. We think in terms of concrete things to illustrate what we're thinking with abstract things. That's the kind of people we are as finite beings.

We can't help but do that, so it's something we welcome about human communication. So, the word that is used here in the Gospel of John to describe this figure of speech in chapter 10, verse 6 is the word *paroimia*. The word *paroimia*, of

course, is a different word than is used in the Synoptic Gospels parable, which in Greek is parable.

The Old Testament term that's sometimes used for this type of discourse is mashal. And so, it's a fun thing to try to trace out how the word mashal in the Old Testament is used, how parable is used in the New Testament, and how paroimia is used here in John. So, we have this word being used a few times in John here for the first time and then again in chapter 16, verses 25 and 29.

And 2 Peter, I think, refers to the same, uses the same word as well in chapter 2, verse 22, I think in reference to a rather sickening thing about the pigs returning to the mud and dogs returning to their own vomit. Sorry for that unpleasant allusion, but that is what's alluded to in 2 Peter, chapter 2. So paroimia is just some sort of a figurative saying, some memorable way of putting something, something that is pithy, something that involves some sort of an analogy, a comparison, a proverb, some catchy way of describing something, a different term than the word parable, of course, but one that I think essentially does the same thing. So, it's rather an inconsequential question about whether this is a parable or not.

What term we use for it doesn't really matter. What we need to see here is just how Jesus is using an extended comparison between his situation that he's dealing with, with the religious leaders and the people of Israel, and how all these terms that he's using have analogies with real life and what's going on right there and right then. So, when Jesus began to speak in this fashion, he's obviously not using language that was something the religious leaders his audience, and the people hadn't heard before.

He's speaking in terms that are quite common in the Old Testament to describe God's relationship to Israel and the relationship of the religious leaders to the rest of the nation. We're well familiar with Psalm 23, the Lord is my shepherd, but the Lord shepherds his people through the leaders that he appoints over Israel. We read in a prophetic text like Jeremiah chapter 23 about the problems with the religious leaders of various sorts and the way they have treated the people.

So, Jeremiah says in Jeremiah 23 verse 1, woe to the shepherds who are destroying and scattering the sheep of my pasture. This is what the Lord says, the God of Israel, to these shepherds, because you have scattered my flock and have driven them away and have not bestowed care upon them, I will bestow punishment upon you for the evil that you have done. I will gather the remnant of my flock out of all the countries where I have driven them, and I will bring them back to their pasture where they will be fruitful and increase in number.

I will place shepherds over them who will tend them, and they will no longer be afraid or terrified, nor will any be missing. So, Jeremiah 23, other texts that we could speak of as well, Ezekiel 34 have the same sort of thing, a text which are excoriating

the present leadership of Israel for the lack of concern for the people, for their corruption, for them being the types of shepherds who are essentially using the flock for their own benefit rather than tending to the flock in a pastoral way. So, in the New Testament, when we have texts like Matthew 9, verse 36, where Jesus looks out over the people and has compassion for them because they are like sheep without a shepherd, we are probably thinking again about that background.

And when Jesus speaks of the lost sheep of the house of Israel in Matthew 9, and texts like that, there's probably an allusion in principle at least to the situation that Jeremiah and Ezekiel and other biblical texts are speaking of, where the sheep are not really being cared for by those who are appointed to be concerned about them. So, we've seen this sort of thing just before our eyes in chapter 9, where we have this poor blind sheep, and the Pharisees are more concerned about using him as a pawn in their debate with Jesus rather than having any real true pastoral care to shepherd his soul. And so, it comes up again here in chapter 10.

So, the background for this I think is very common, and the same thing is also true in chapter 15, where Jesus speaks of himself as the true vine. The reason why he uses the word true there, the reason why he uses the word good here, is because he is subtly contrasting himself with the current leadership, which is neither good nor authentic in the way they shepherd the people of Israel. So, when we consider than the type of comparison that's going on in the text, we have certain things that are clear that Jesus explains, and there are certain things here that we perhaps could conjecture and fill into the imagery that he's using.

This is typically the way things work in parables, is it not? We have some people who teach us that parables just make one main point, and there's only one point of comparison that's worthy of being taught or preached. We have other folks who perhaps go to seed with parables and try to find everything in the parable to correspond with the reality the speaker is talking about. But in reality, probably we need to remind ourselves that parables are stories, and allegories are stories, and they're all doing the same thing.

What they're doing, depends on the context and depends on what the speaker's intention is. There are certainly some figurative stories that intend only to make one point, the so-called moral of the story. We have such things in Matthew 25 where Jesus speaks of the bridesmaids who weren't prepared.

And the moral of that story, as he himself says, is that you need to be ready to meet the bridegroom at any moment. You don't really know when he's coming. There's no way that Jesus in that particular context makes any extended discussion about the bridesmaids stand for this, the ones who didn't bring enough oil to stand for that, the oil stands for this, and go buy some stands for that.

Nothing like that, just one main idea. Other stories that Jesus tells, such as the Parable of the Sower, receive a detailed interpretation with the sower being described as the word of God of the kingdom, the seed being sown, and four different responses to the seed that's being sown. So, there's quite a detailed interpretation of that.

So, in these cases, you can find one main idea, but you can certainly find the corresponding sub-ideas that support the main ideas throughout the parable. That's pretty much what we have going here in John 10. There's not just one main comparison made, there are several levels of comparison.

So, it's pretty clear here that Jesus is the good shepherd. The shepherd is mentioned in verse 2, and in verses 11 and 14, Jesus is describing himself as that shepherd. The sheep, obviously, are Israel and or the disciples of Jesus within Israel.

The interesting thing about metaphors like this is that there are multiple things going on. So, Jesus is also the door of the sheep, in addition to being the shepherd. The sheepfold is spoken of, that is the pen where the sheep are kept, particularly at night, to be safe from marauders.

That is mentioned in the earthly story. There's no corresponding reference to it in Jesus' interpretation. Jesus does not bring that out.

So, what would we say about that? It seems rather obvious. He's simply saying that he's gathering people under his care, and perhaps just the church is what he means by the sheepfold, people who are under his protective guidance. There is the doorkeeper, who is opening up the sheepfold to people who deserve to be there, and evidently keeping out other people who don't.

This is not clearly made known in the way Jesus speaks of the parable. There's no corresponding entity to that. So, we might say that's the Twelve, that's the apostles.

They're the ones who are guiding Israel, at least as Jesus looks to the future, and preserving them from the false people who are out to get the sheep. Jesus speaks of thieves and robbers, as well as of strangers, as well as of hirelings, as well as of the wolf. So, we have both humans and, from the animal kingdom, the wolf, individuals who are not really looking out for the sheep.

The thieves and the robbers are attempting to steal the sheep from the rightful owner. The stranger is perhaps a subtle version of a thief and a robber, someone who is going to come and try to shepherd the sheep away from the rightful owners. The hireling would be someone who is just working a job, and has no real loyalty to the sheep, and as soon as any danger is posed, like by the wolf, the hireling takes off and doesn't really stand by the sheep in a loyal way.

So, do we have any real explanation of what Jesus is teaching of these entities? Well, I think it's fairly clear he is referring to all who came before him as thieves and robbers. The word all is, I think, somewhat misleading there. I don't think Jesus is intending to lump everyone together in the history of Israel, but he's certainly saying that many have not really been the type of pastoral leaders that Israel needs.

There's no real correspondence specifically stated for the stranger, the hireling, and the wolf. We might supply such entities as false teachers claiming to be Jesus. We learn that there will be false messiahs, people claiming to be true followers of Jesus but aren't.

Perhaps the hireling, again, would be a reference to those in Israel's leadership who are in it simply for what they can get out of it, their own status, not for the welfare of the sheep. You can't hardly help but think of the wolf as Satan, can you? That sort of works. So perhaps that will help as well.

It's not as if the Gospel of John is without its allusions to Satan and his desire to ruin the faith of the people of God. The reference to the other sheep in the fold in verse 16 is quite interesting. I can't help but think Jesus was speaking of people like the woman that he met at the well at Sychar in Samaria, John chapter 4, and others in the book who are not necessarily Jewish by nature but are Jews in the way they are interested in the God of Israel.

And so, Jesus wishes to bring other sheep into the fold and he wants them to be a part of the same fold so that there'll be just one fold and one shepherd. And that in many ways I think fits the biblical theology of the people of God in other texts. So, this extended analogy that's being drawn is pretty clear and pretty interesting and very edifying I think to think about it in this way.

There's a very distinct website called Agnes Day which uses sheep to make spiritual points and this website has some interesting cartoons featuring the Gospel of John in particular. So, the hermeneutics of the parodia of the association Jesus has made here is being deliberated by this cartoon. It's a cartoon but it's getting at a very important matter here about the interpretation of the figure.

So, the one sheep says to the other sheep, is Jesus the shepherd or the gate? Obviously, Jesus says he's both in this. So, the more educated sheep here, evidently this is the seminary professor, says there are several metaphors here which is the type of thing professors say to throw students off track so that they don't really realize that the professor doesn't have the answer. Perhaps that's what's going on.

So, the first sheep says again, well who are the other sheep? And the guy says, well that's you. And he says, it's me? So, we'll have some more discussion from Agnes Day

in a little bit relating to another theological point with this parable but it seems that this one has just come to the realization that the parable was speaking directly about him. So, moving to some of the details here for our consideration.

Who are these other sheep? We just mentioned briefly about it but apparently, this is an intimation. This is a hint that God is interested in people who are not Jewish by their ethnicity. He is interested in them of course but perhaps in the Abrahamic pattern of Genesis chapter 12, Jesus is trying to alert the Jewish people to the reality that God's original purpose is not to be exclusive with the seed of Abraham but to use the seed of Abraham as his missional agency to reach and to bless all the nations of the earth.

So, we've had the woman of Samaria in chapter 4. We've also had allusions in chapter 11 and in chapter 12 as well ahead of us where I think there'll be some intimations of this interest of God. This is another text in John where Jesus speaks of himself as the Father's agent. So, you notice in texts like chapter 10 and verse 12, the hired hand is not the shepherd and does not own the sheep.

So, when he sees the wolf coming, he abandons the sheep and runs away. Then the wolf attacks the flock and scatters it. The man runs away because he's a hired hand, and cares nothing for the sheep.

So, Jesus is speaking about himself in a contrasting way in verse 15, just as the Father knows me and I know the Father, I lay down my life for the sheep. So, in contrast to the hired hand who has no real responsibility to the person who hired him, Jesus is faithful to the one who quote-unquote hired him, the one who is the father who sent him into the world, and he is going to go to whatever measure necessary to care for the life of the sheep. We see further in the discourse in the second half at Hanukkah that Jesus speaks of himself as the son of the Father.

My Father who gave the sheep to me, verse 29, is greater than all. No one can snatch them out of my father's hand. And here's the kicker, I and my father are one.

I and my father are one. So that affirms again that Jesus does have a unique relationship to the Father. Going all the way back to John chapter 5 and the very first dispute Jesus got into with the religious leaders in Jerusalem, you may recall, was over Jesus saying, my father works up till now and I work.

And so, the intimate, close, unique relationship of Jesus and the Father was a problem there, and it's still a problem here. Another interesting theological point of this passage is the way in which Jesus speaks of the security of the sheep. We have a great deal of theological dispute about that in Christendom.

We speak of doctrines like the perseverance of the saints and eternal security, things like this. I think it's important to note that in this passage, Jesus not only says that no one can take the sheep out of the Father's hand, which keeps the Calvinists happy with their doctrine of eternal security, but Jesus also speaks of the necessity of the sheep following the voice of the master. In fact, Jesus says that the sheep won't follow a stranger.

They know the voice of the master and they don't listen to the voice, any other voice. That would, I think, keep the Arminians happy as well, that you don't have security unless you have perseverance. So the imagery used here in this chapter has enough in it to comfort and afflict both sides of this debate in pop theology.

The sheep are indeed held in the father's hand and no one can snatch them away, but the sheep are consciously putting themselves in the father's hand by their own perseverance in the faith, their own following the shepherd of the flock. More on that as we conclude, but we have a few other things to talk about first. So here's another text in John that speaks of Jesus in a very high way as divine.

In fact, in this passage after Jesus says, I am the father, are one, they say, we are stoning you not for doing good works but for blasphemy because you being a mere man are claiming to be God. So, they understood Jesus' discussion of his unity with the Father and the way he and the Father worked together to preserve the sheep. They've understood the principle that to be the agent of someone is to be the same authority of that person.

So, they're saying for all practical purposes, you're saying that you are God and they didn't like that and they were prepared to stone him once again, not at all for the first time. This leads to the interesting discussion from Psalm 82 and we'll talk about that here in just a moment. So, this chapter has several allusions to the Old Testament.

We've already mentioned the fact that it has the imagery of the flock. Texts like Jeremiah 23, Ezekiel 34. Getting a bit more specific, in chapter 10 and verse 16 where Jesus said, I have other sheep that are not of this sheep and I must bring them also, maybe alluding specifically to texts in Ezekiel 34 and Ezekiel 37.

We have the reference in 10:22 to Hanukkah, which of course is not found in the Hebrew Bible as such, but in the apocryphal material in 1st Maccabees and in 2nd Maccabees. And there is some discussion about this in the Talmud, the Babylonian Talmud, that's what the B stands for here, in Tractate Shabbat 21b. If you care to look at that, you can find all this information online now.

It's amazing how many things you can find that is wide open there to be read. But probably what is the most interesting and in some ways perplexing use of the Bible,

the Tanakh, the Torah, Nevi'im, and Ketuvim in this chapter is the way in which Jesus refers to Psalm 82 in chapter 10 verse 34. When Jesus is about to be stoned for saying, I and my father are one, they claim he's blaspheming.

So, he replies to them in verse 34, is it not written in your law, I said you are gods. So, this takes us back to Psalm 82, which is a short Psalm with a great deal of back and forth within it. The Psalm begins by describing God as presiding over a great assembly and rendering judgment amongst the gods, amongst the Elohim.

Perhaps this is a reference to the angelic beings who assemble before God in the heavenly throne room and God is adjudicating what they do and giving them their respective tasks. The Psalm then takes a bit of a departure from that evidently, unless these gods that are being spoken of here are perhaps human beings, perhaps people as civil authorities or perhaps even judges over Israel. And if so, then rendering judgment amongst the gods would be rendering judgment not amongst the heavenly council, but amongst the earthly leaders whom God has given his authority to rule Israel.

So, injustice perpetrated by these so-called gods, these judges of Israel under this interpretation is excoriated here. How long will you defend the unjust, and show partiality to the wicked? Instead, in verse three, defend the weak and the fatherless, uphold the cause of the poor and the oppressed, and rescue the weak and the needy. Verse five then would be speaking of these either angelic beings or human leaders, human judges as being useless.

These gods know nothing. They understand nothing. They walk about in darkness.

All the foundations of the earth are shaken. Verse six then is the text that Jesus is specifically alluding to in John 10, verse 34. I said, you are gods, you are all sons of the Most High.

But this is not something that is a good thing. The problem is that due to their behavior, and their lack of faithfulness to God, verse seven, you'll die like mortals. You'll fall like every other ruler.

Psalm concludes with the saying, rise up, O God, judge the earth for all the nations are your inheritance. A rather broad cosmic thing here, not related simply to Israel, but a concern about God's justice for not simply Israel, but for all the nations. So on balance then, Psalm 82 is speaking about the lack of fidelity to God, either of angelic beings or perhaps more likely of human beings whom he has delegated his divine authority to.

Because they have divine authority, they are functioning as God and in some sense could be called small g gods. So, Jesus then alluding to this psalm, which has its own

interpretive difficulties, is a pretty interesting thing. Is it not written in your law, I said, you are gods? 1035, here's Jesus' argument.

If he called them gods to whom the word of God came. So, this is an if-then type of syllogism. If he called them gods to whom the word of God came.

In other words, the entities spoken of in Psalm 82 are called gods because they were tasked, they were delegated the word of God authority as some sort of intermediaries to enforce, to cause people to obey the word of God, to use the word of God to achieve justice in the world. If he called them gods to whom the word of God came, major premise. A minor premise, the scripture cannot be broken.

The Bible is authoritative. There's no text in the Bible, which you can render null and void. Jesus said, here's what the Bible says, and we accept the authority of the Bible.

So, here's then the conclusion. What about the one whom the father set apart as his very own and sent into the world? This is what would classically be called an argument from the lesser to the greater in formal logic. They use Latin for some of these things.

So, it'd be an argument, that rabbinical literature is full of this sort of thing. And it's found elsewhere in the New Testament as well, particularly in Paul. You can argue either from the lesser to the greater or from the greater to the lesser and make a point by drawing an analogy between the two.

The rabbis called it light and heavy. So, Jesus is arguing from, I guess we could say a light situation. If he called them gods, whom the word of God came, then to even the greater situation, how can you be mad at me? How can you be angry? Why are these stones in your hand? All I said was that I am the father's son.

So, I am the one whom the Father sanctified and set into the world. Why do you accuse me of blasphemy? Because I said, I am God's son. I didn't say, I am God, Elohim.

I said I am the son of God. So, he's saying you have no problem with the scriptural text with human beings wielding divine authority and God saying that in some sense, they are functioning as God. They are functionally God.

They're gods. You don't have a problem with that. You have a problem with me saying, I am the son of God and doing the works of God.

So, he says then essentially, if I do these things, even if you don't believe me, that I am the father's son, believe the works, that you may know and understand that the father is in me and I am in the father. Of course, the most recent work that he would

be referring to would be the work of healing the blind man back in chapter nine. But as the moral of the story in chapter nine puts it in an ironic way, the Pharisees who think they see, who think they have divine insight, who are those to whom the word of God came in the language of Psalm 82, the very people who are the authorities who are supposed to mediate the authority of God to the earth and achieve justice and righteousness.

These are the people who are treating Jesus in a very unjust and unrighteous way. So again, they tried to seize him, keeping in character, we're familiar with this at the end of chapter eight and chapter nine, and here again at the end of chapter 10. Catching on to a theme here.

Again, they tried to seize him, but he escaped the grasp. Then Jesus went back across the Jordan to the place John had been baptizing. So as the chapter ends, Jesus takes a bit of a hiatus, a bit of a respite away from Jerusalem, away from all the heat and the tension that's being caused there.

And he spends some time across the Jordan. So, the chapter in John 10 is essentially the same type of chapter we've been looking at since we got to chapter seven. So, if you're listening to all these videos, one right after the other, you've had a pretty heavy dose of difficulties and tension and conflict that Jesus has had with the religious leader.

You've been gotten for punishment if you've listened to all these things together because this is very sad material as Jesus comes to the city of God, Jerusalem, and tries to be the Messiah of God and is not received by the leaders of the people of God. So perhaps Psalm 82 is a fitting conclusion to the way that Jesus has been treated. The injustice perpetrated in the Psalm originally is perhaps being perpetrated on Jesus here by the same types of leaders in John 7-10.

As we conclude, we come back to Agnes Dei for a bit of a theological reflection. So, we have the sheeply dialogue happening here. Do you know what the best part is about having a good shepherd? The professorial sheep is stumped here and says, I can't imagine.

And the seemingly lay sheep is possessed with great insight and says, being a sheep. So, what is the greatest thing about having Jesus as our Lord and Savior? Well, being saved and being under his lordship. Another cartoon from the same site, I think the left sheep here is playing with the professor on the right.

Hey, I've discovered I don't have to go to church anymore. Huh? It doesn't matter what I do. Jesus said nobody can snatch me from his hand.

The professor is ready for this one. He says, yeah, but it sounds to me like you're getting ready to jump out. So, we have an evangelical Christian today, those who stress how wonderful it is to have Jesus as the good shepherd.

We would call this security. We also have folks in evangelical Christendom today who speak a lot about the necessity that we have to make sure we are hanging in there with Jesus. So, we have a sort of a poking fun here, I think, at both the Calvinists and the Armenians, both those who want to stress human responsibility and those who want to stress divine sovereignty and the security of believers who have come to God in Christ.

The better part of wisdom in all this, of course, you probably see what I'm getting at, is to realize that it certainly is an amazing blessing, a work of amazing grace. And grace that's not amazing is not really grace, is it? By God's amazing grace, Jesus has become our good shepherd. And as sheep who have received admission into his flock, why would we ever want to jump out? Why would we not want, as John 10 puts it over and over again, to be the kind of sheep who hear his voice and don't listen to the voice of a stranger and the kind of sheep who follow him very, very closely?

This is Dr. David Turner in his teaching on the Gospel of John. This is session 12, Tense Times in Jerusalem, The Good Shepherd, John 10:1-42.