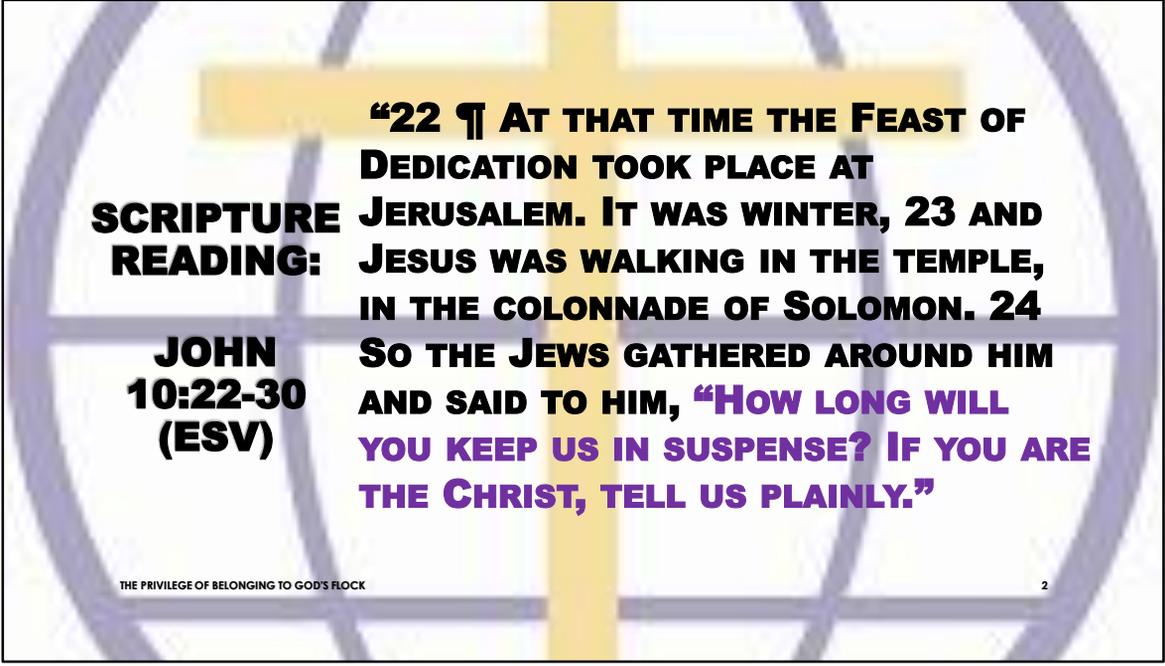


THE PRIVILEGE OF BELONGING TO GOD'S FLOCK

**Grace Communion International
Minister: Eric Vautour**

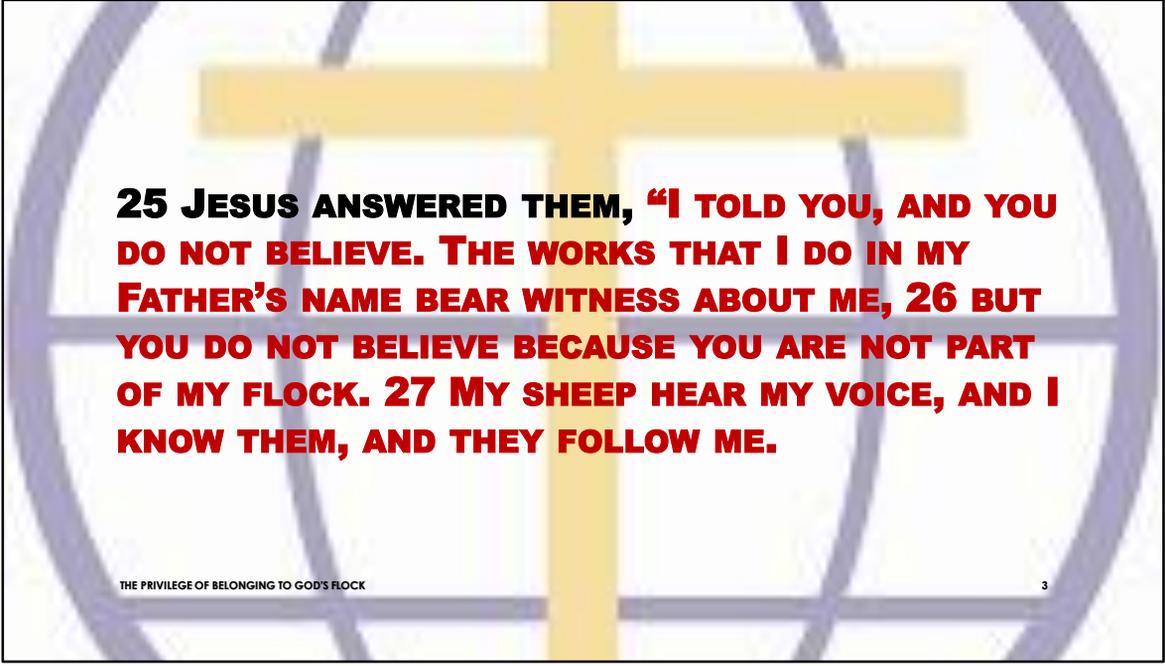
Date: May 12, 2019



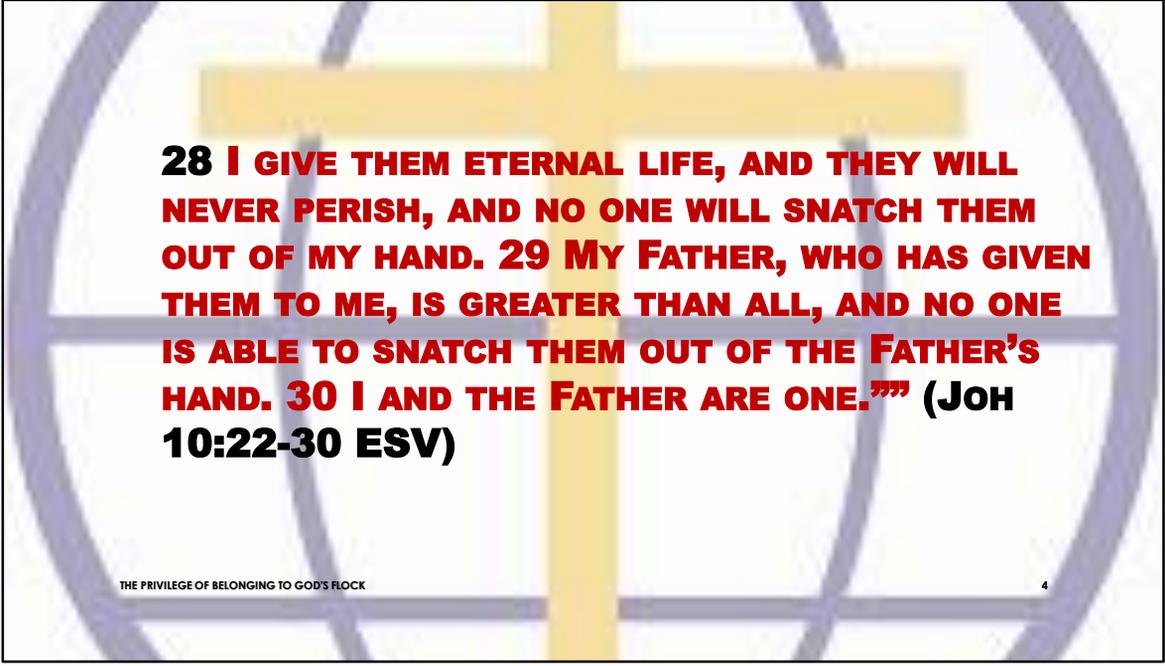
“22 ¶ AT THAT TIME THE FEAST OF DEDICATION TOOK PLACE AT JERUSALEM. IT WAS WINTER, 23 AND JESUS WAS WALKING IN THE TEMPLE, IN THE COLONNADE OF SOLOMON. 24 SO THE JEWS GATHERED AROUND HIM AND SAID TO HIM, “HOW LONG WILL YOU KEEP US IN SUSPENSE? IF YOU ARE THE CHRIST, TELL US PLAINLY.”

SCRIPTURE READING:

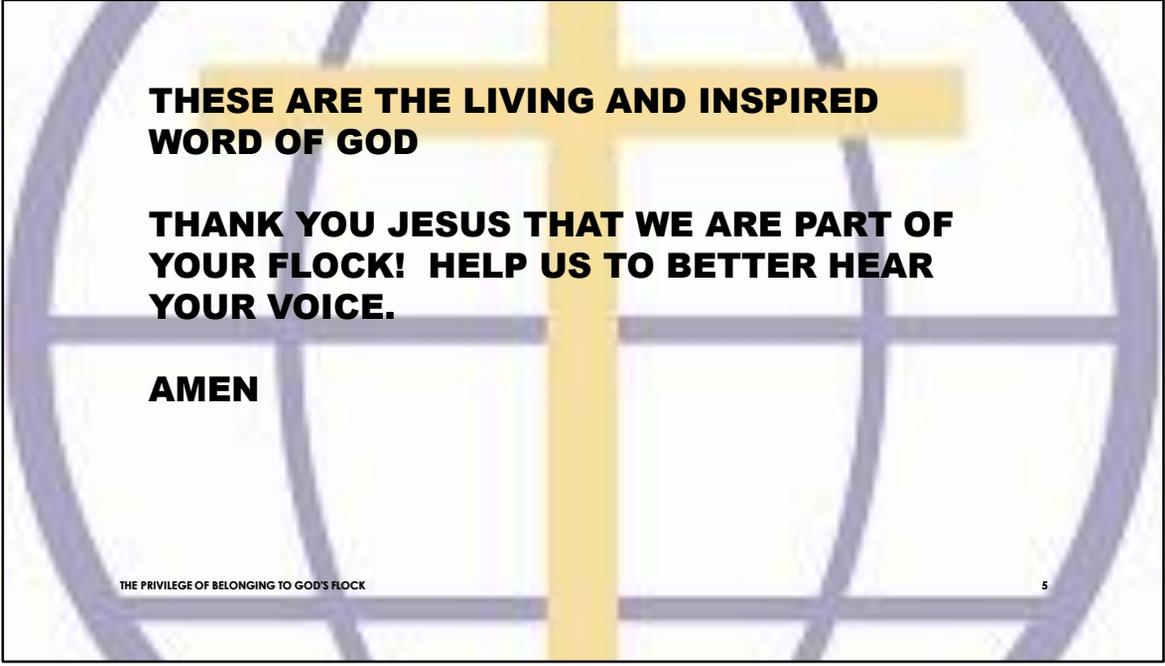
**JOHN
10:22-30
(ESV)**



25 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 PART OF MY FLOCK. 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. 30 I AND THE FATHER ARE ONE.” (JOH 10:22-30 ESV)



**THESE ARE THE LIVING AND INSPIRED
WORD OF GOD**

**THANK YOU JESUS THAT WE ARE PART OF
YOUR FLOCK! HELP US TO BETTER HEAR
YOUR VOICE.**

AMEN

THE PRIVILEGE OF BELONGING TO GOD'S FLOCK

5

Today, let us unpack and think about the words we have just read and the implication they have for us, his church, his flock.

Jesus became incarnate in our flesh as a Jew. With his contemporaries, he joined in the celebration of the feast of Dedication also called Hanukkah and the Festival of Lights.

In the 160s B.C. the Maccabean War erupted, pitting conservative Jewish fighters against Greeks and Hellenized Jews. Its first leader, Judas Maccabeus, captured Jerusalem's temple and in 165 B.C. rededicated it. Hanukkah is a Hebrew word meaning "dedication", and it became the name of the winter festival in Jerusalem that remembered these events. Sometimes (as in the NIV) it is called "The Feast of Dedication". In the first century, it was celebrated for eight days in Jerusalem (recalling eight miraculous days when Judas' supply of oil burned in the temple).

Burge, Gary M.. John (The NIV Application Commentary Book 4). Zondervan. Kindle Edition.

For more information on the background of the feast of Dedication, you can always check with any encyclopedia or easier still, you can just Google it!

This feast is celebrated in the winter.

The Jews asked Jesus a very pointed question even if he had told him before whom he was. They asked him. **“if you are the Christ, tell us plainly.”**

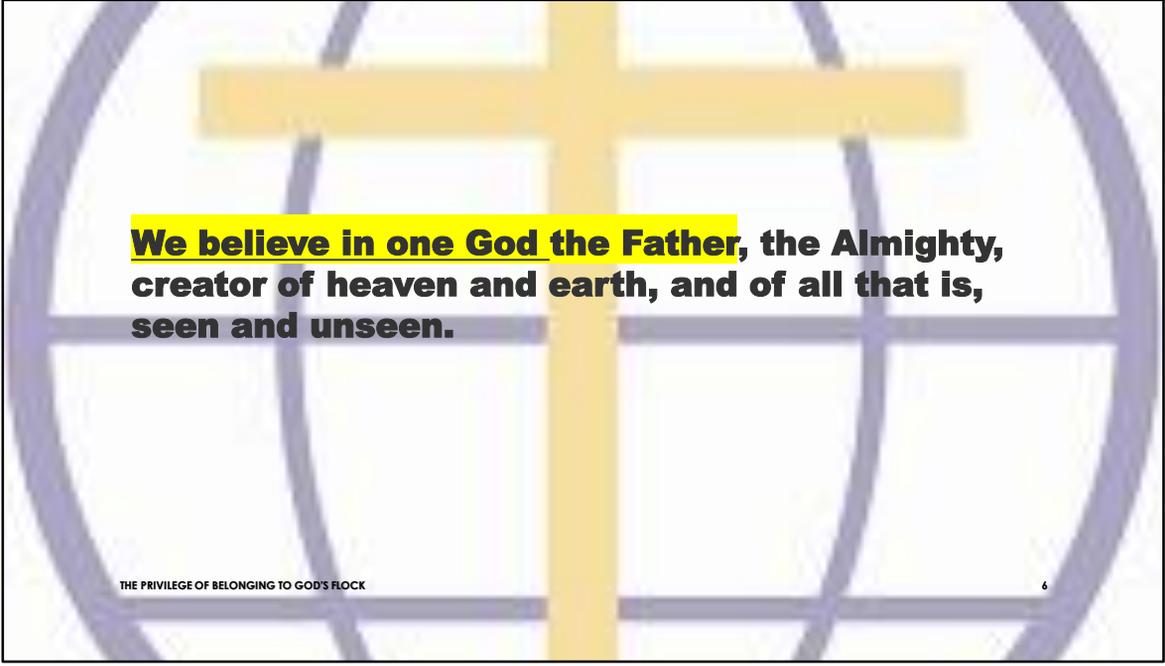
Jesus responded that he had already told them who he was but they did not believe.

As we read the Gospels, we see all the signs given by Jesus to show who he was.

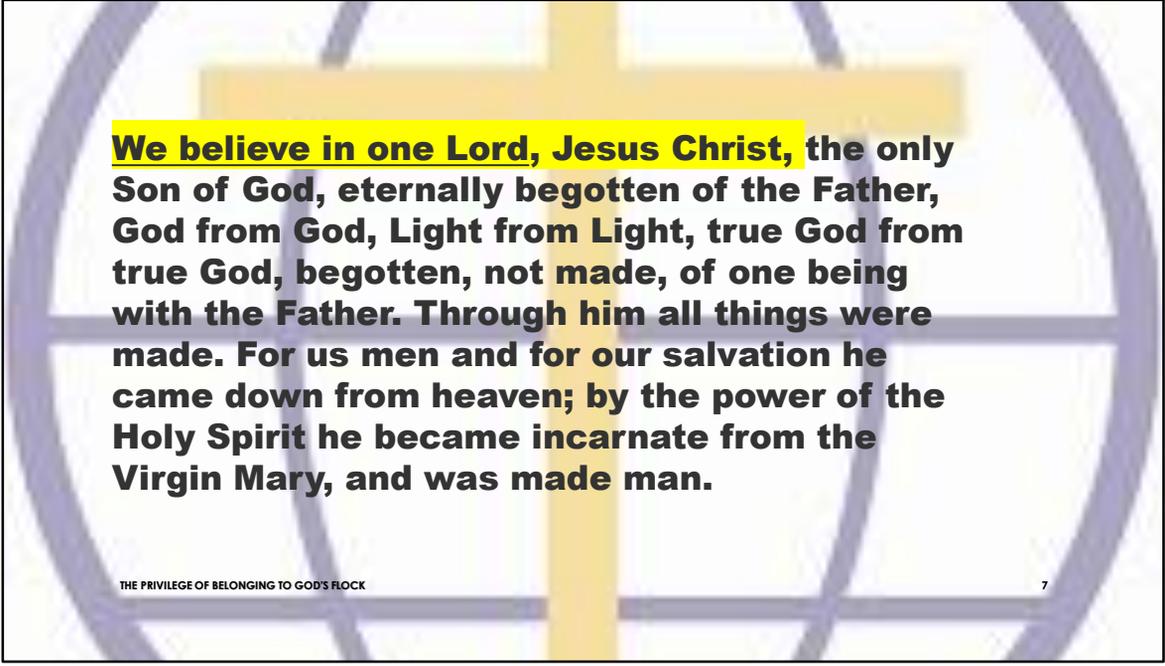
- He had healed countless numbers of people.
- He had driven out demons and freed people possessed by devils.
- He had fed thousands of people with five barley loaves and two fish.
- He had said very plainly who he was, as we read in the earlier chapter of the Gospel of John.

Because of their paradigm or way of thinking, they could not believe that this young man was God descended from heaven, sent forth by God the Father to become a man and to live a sinless human life in our human sinful flesh.

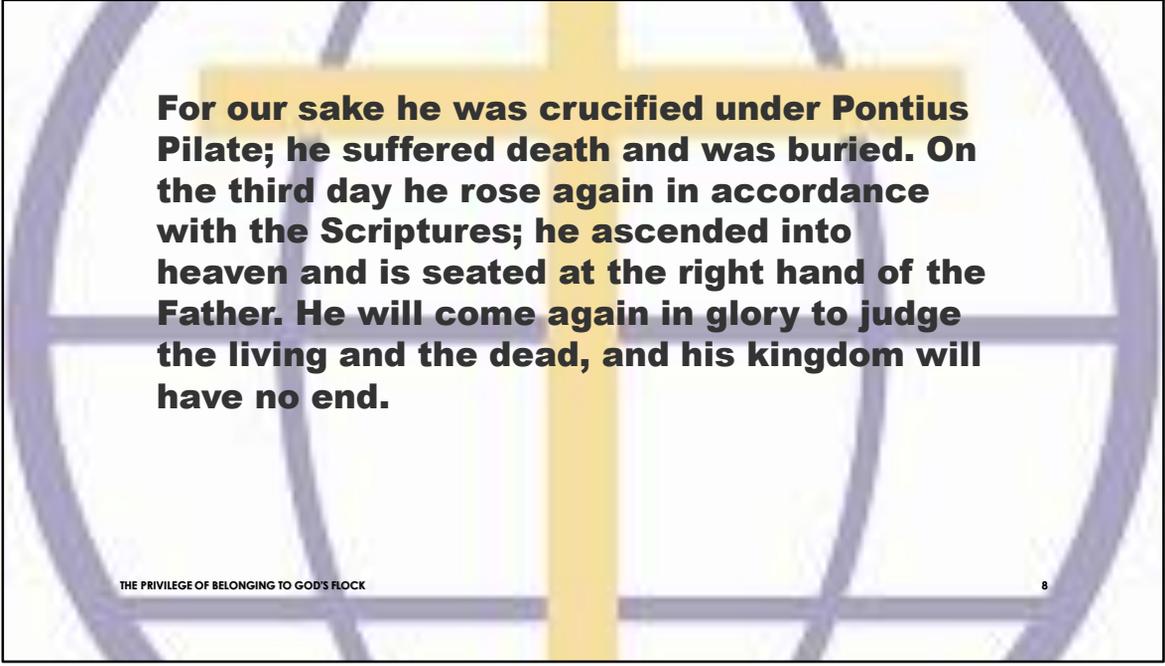
In these two verses, Jesus clearly tells us who he is. He is one with the Father. The following is what we believe about Jesus as written in the Nicene—Constantinople Creed (381 A.D.)



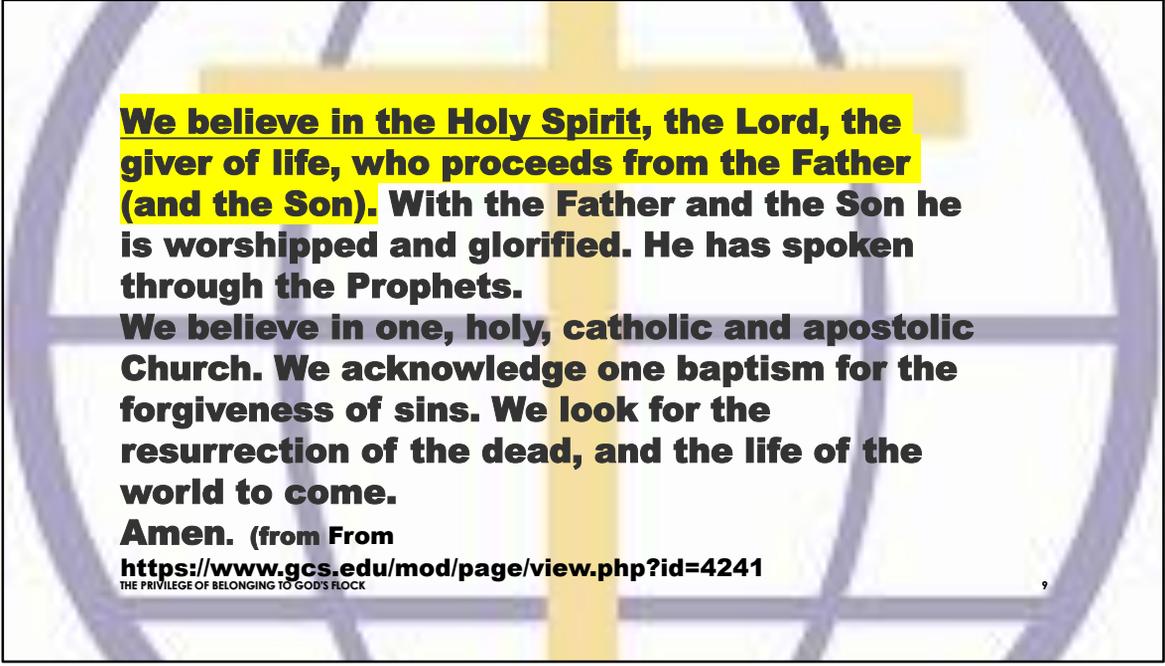
We believe in one God the Father, the Almighty, creator of heaven and earth, and of all that is, seen and unseen.



We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one being with the Father. Through him all things were made. For us men and for our salvation he came down from heaven; by the power of the Holy Spirit he became incarnate from the Virgin Mary, and was made man.



For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried. On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures; he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end.



We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father (and the Son). With the Father and the Son he is worshipped and glorified. He has spoken through the Prophets.

We believe in one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church. We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come.

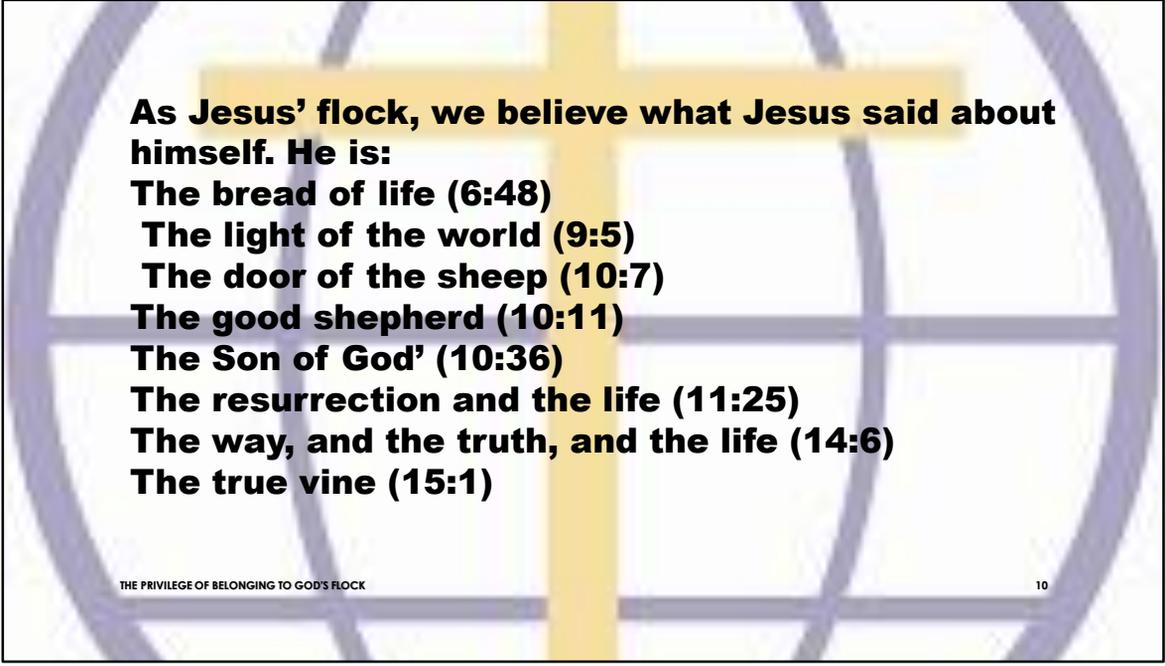
Amen. (from From

<https://www.gcs.edu/mod/page/view.php?id=4241>

THE PRIVILEGE OF BELONGING TO GOD'S FLOCK

9

Jesus identified himself clearly while on earth. (Next slide)



As Jesus' flock, we believe what Jesus said about himself. He is:

The bread of life (6:48)

The light of the world (9:5)

The door of the sheep (10:7)

The good shepherd (10:11)

The Son of God' (10:36)

The resurrection and the life (11:25)

The way, and the truth, and the life (14:6)

The true vine (15:1)

When Jesus said that he is the truth as he defines himself, he tells us much. Truth is is very exclusive. Truth excludes all that is not true. Truth exposes lies.

Jesus says that not only he is the truth but he also says that his word is truth. When he prayed to the Father before his brutal death on the cross for us, he said, **"Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth."** (Joh 17:17 ESV).

Since Jesus is God at one with the Father, his word is also truth.

Jesus also tells us that we are to live by every word of God **"But he answered, 'It is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.'"** (Mt 4:4 ESV).

We know that all of the Bible is the inspired word of God as we read in Paul's epistle to Timothy.

We also know for sure that we live under the terms of the new covenant.

Knowing that Jesus is one with the Father, that he is God changes everything.

Living in that belief, in that faith, living in the truth and being united to the truth who is Jesus permits us to know who we are. We are his sheep because he has opened our ears to hear his voice.

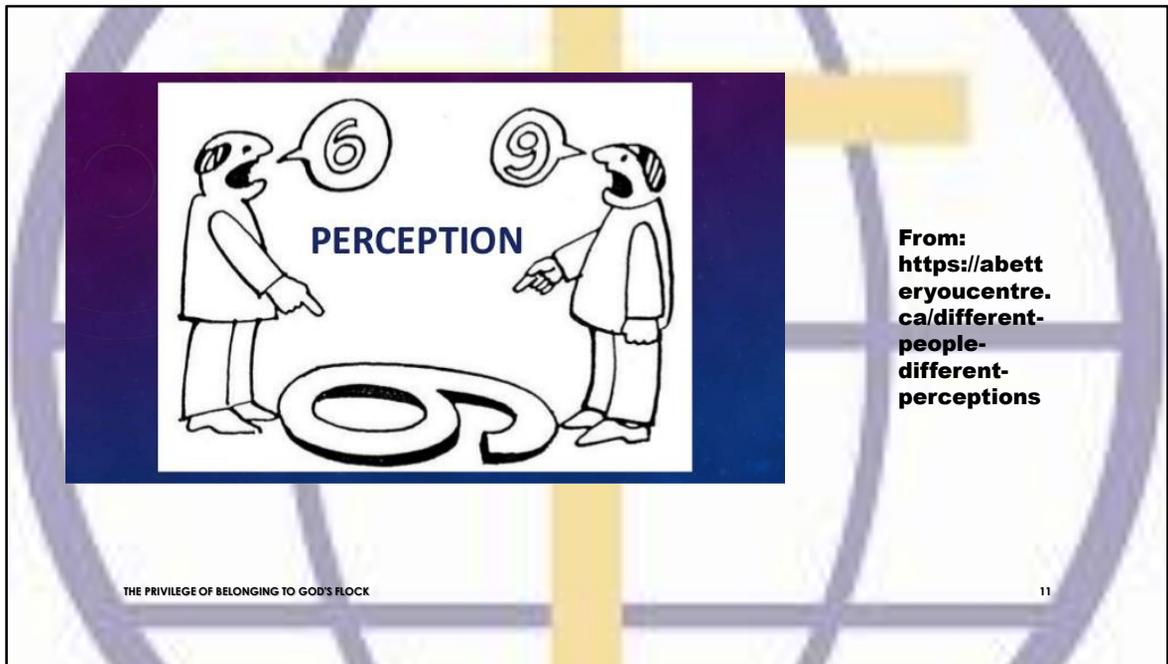
We also know that we are known by God. Hearing his voice, knowing who he is, we follow him. We obey him.

In his Daily Devotional titled **We Must be obedient to Jesus' Teachings** dated May 7, 2019, *Dallas Willard, a well respected and faithful theologian, says that if anyone looks without reserves in the bible and with open eyes, he or she can see clearly that God's words intends obedience. He continues by saying that life in Christ has to do with obedience to his teaching. If we don't start with obedience to his teaching, we might as well forget about a distinctive Christian spirituality.*

Jesus is no ordinary man. He is God in our very flesh

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Knowing that Jesus is the Son of God and that he is truth, how are we to respond to him?



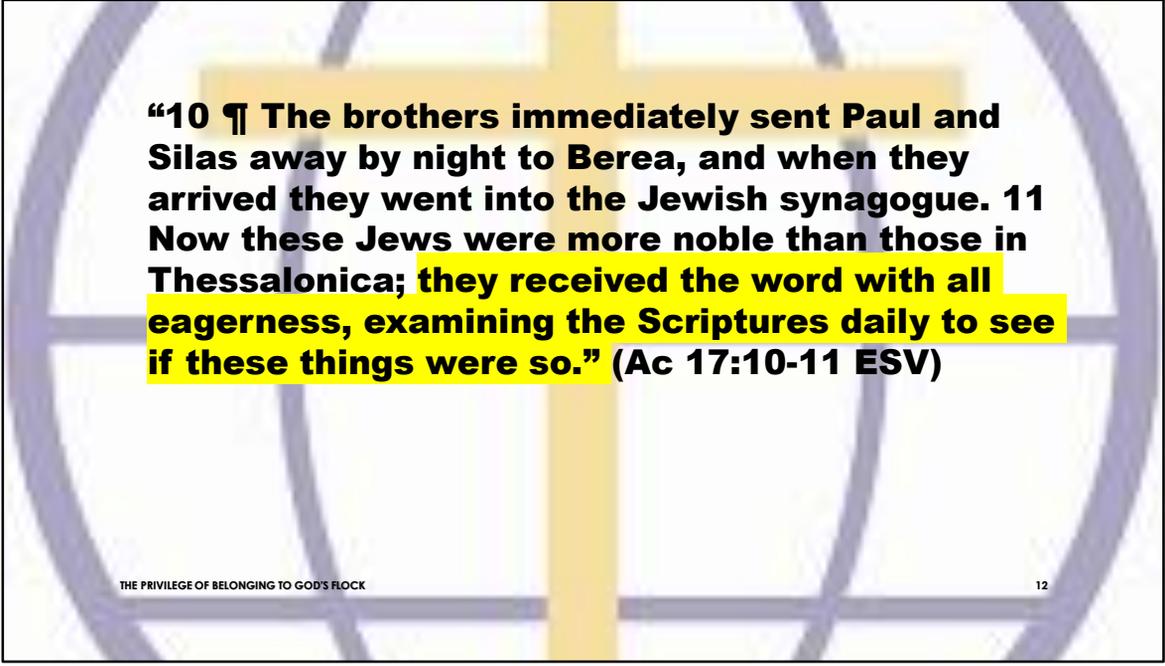
As people, we can look at the same event or people, etc.. with very different eyes. We can also hear with different ears words being said. Without humility, this can be a cause of many conflicts because we tend to be convinced in our minds that we are correct. As human beings, we can be so close-minded that we are reluctant to see another point of view.

As God's flock, we are to have a different outlook and a different view of Jesus. In many ways, we are to be like scientists looking at an object different from ourselves. Scientists, instead of looking at what they think they see, they endeavor to let the object of their studies inform them.

As God's people, instead of projecting our own thoughts on Jesus, we are to let Jesus define who he is. We are to try to understand what he tells us in his word.

Seeking God is a desire to know God and to know how he reveals himself to us, how he wants us to live from his point of view and not from ours.

A good biblical example of this is the Bereans.



“10 ¶ The brothers immediately sent Paul and Silas away by night to Berea, and when they arrived they went into the Jewish synagogue. 11 Now these Jews were more noble than those in Thessalonica; they received the word with all eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see if these things were so.” (Ac 17:10-11 ESV)

Knowing that Jesus is the truth, we are to feed on him through the sacrament of communion. We are also to feed on his word to grow in his knowledge and grace.

As God's sheep, as God's flock, we strive to follow Jesus as he abides in us and we abide in him. His desire to follow Jesus is a gift from God. ***“12 ¶ Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, so now, not only as in my presence but much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, 13 for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure.” (Php 2:12-13 ESV)***

We feed on Jesus through communion and through the study of his word not because we have to but because we want to know our Shepherd and our Lord more intimately. We want to follow what he says because we will live with him for eternity.

God tells us very encouragingly that in Christ, we will never perish and that we are safe in his hands. God the Father will not permit that we will be taken away or snatch from Jesus.

God the Father and Jesus are of the same essence and of the same mind because God is one.

To people outside God's flock, saying that Jesus is the exclusive way to eternal life and that Jesus is the eternal Son of God being both God and man in his one nature is offensive.

When Jesus identified himself one again to the Jews of his day, they picked up stones to stone him because they thought that he was blaspheming by saying that he was God.

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Recently, I read the following about sheep following their shepherd, "As already mentioned, Arab shepherds are well known for knowing their sheep personally. During the Palestinian uprising in the late 1980s, the Israeli army decided to punish a village near Bethlehem for not paying its taxes (which, the village claimed, simply financed their occupation). The officer in command rounded up all of the village animals and placed them in a large barbed-wire pen. Later in the week he was approached by a woman who begged him to release her flock, arguing that since her husband was dead, the animals were her only source of livelihood. He pointed to the pen containing hundreds of animals and humorously quipped that it was impossible because he could not find her animals. She asked that if she could in fact separate them herself, would he be willing to let her take them? He agreed. A soldier opened the gate and the woman's son produced a small reed flute. He played a simple tune again and again—and soon sheep heads began popping up across the pen. The young boy continued his music and walked home, followed by his flock of twenty-five sheep."

Burge, Gary M. John (The NIV Application Commentary Book 4). Zondervan. Kindle Edition.

To belong to Jesus, our great Shepherd, the Creator and Sustainer of this whole vast

universe and to know we belong to him is a priceless privilege.

To know that we are secure in Jesus gives us assurance when we approach the throne of God in prayer and gives us assurance as we live our everyday normal lives.

Knowing that Jesus gives us eternal life and that we will never perish gives us hope that no other human philosophies or religion can ever give us.

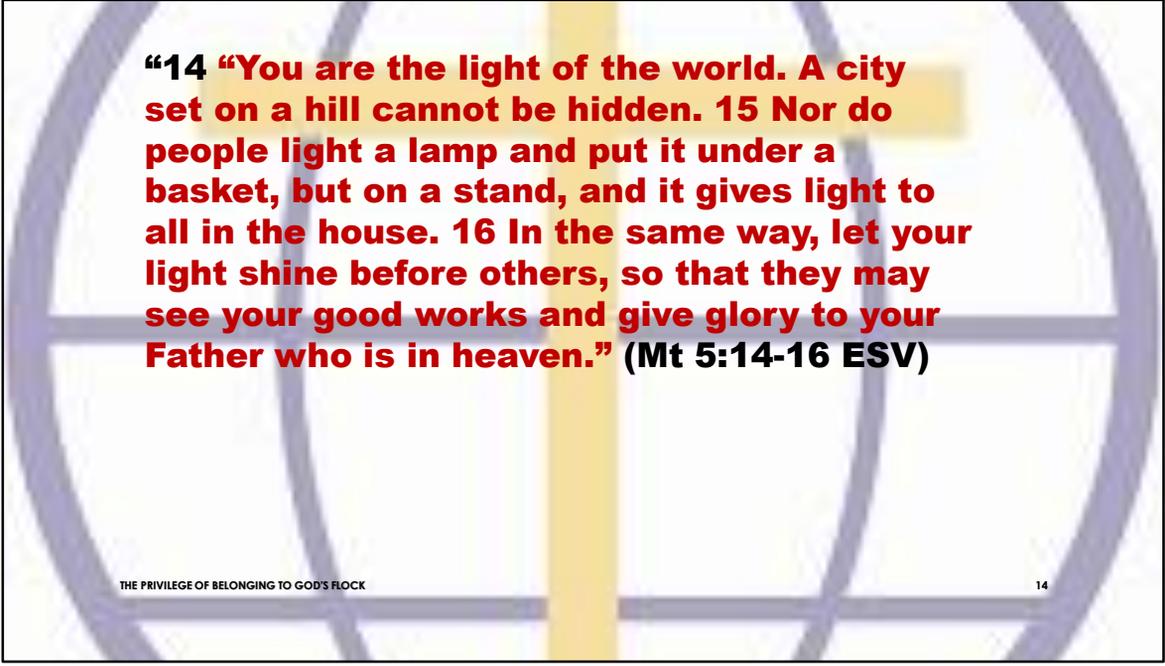
Considering how Jesus humbly reacted to the Jews who rejected him is an inspiration to us. Instead of fighting with the Jews, when they tried to stone him, he continued to teach them, as we read in verses 31–39 of the same chapter. As they sought to arrest him, he escaped from their hands. He simply went across to the Jordan and continued to do the Father's work.

Jesus loved them in spite of their hostility towards him. The Israelites, the Jews, are a type of the general unconverted attitude towards Jesus. Instead of fighting with them, Jesus accepted to take on this rebelliousness upon himself, this despising of God, and take it to the cross where he became all the ugliness of sin for us. As our representative human being, he broke the back of sin through his resurrection.

This rebelliousness against God continues in our day as we see the arrogance and the perceive independence from God which, in reality, not independence or freedom but is slavery to sin. This human independence is only an illusion when independence is lived in rebelliousness and denial of Jesus

.
In this world, God has called and his calling to himself people who are given the ability to hear the voice of our Saviour.

Just as the Israelites were called to be an example to the nations under the old covenant where they failed, we are called to be salt and light to a dying world.



“14 “You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. 15 Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. 16 In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.” (Mt 5:14-16 ESV)

Today, let us be grateful to God for the privilege of his calling and knowing who Jesus is and who the Father is.

Let us be thankful that only in Jesus and through revelation and we know who we are and know our true identity.

Let us be thankful that we have been called for the wonderful purpose of letting Jesus shine in our lives through the Holy Spirit.

Let us pray to have sharp years to hear how the Holy Spirit is leading us as we follow our Great Shepherd.