

I and the Father Are One, Part 1

Scripture: John 10:22–24

Code: 43-54

Open your Bible to the tenth chapter of the gospel of John. It doesn't seem very long ago we began our study of the gospel of John. And yet, it's been a while. These things kind of become years before we don't even realize it. But we find ourselves in the tenth chapter, and this is really a significant chapter. If you just do the math, there are 21 chapters in the gospel of John, and this is chapter 10, and we've already gone through the first 21 verses. So, we're approaching halfway through the gospel of John. That's true of the text of the gospel of John. However, in the history of Jesus, we're three months from the end. Because the last half of the gospel of John is devoted to events that take place for the most part in the last week of His life.

Now, chapter 10 ends with Jesus leaving Jerusalem for three months. When He comes back in chapter 11, He comes back to Bethany, raises Lazarus from the dead, and then in chapter 12 enters into Jerusalem. And we all know about that. That's the beginning of Passion Week. And then chapters 13, 14, 15, and 16 all take up one night in the upper room. And then chapter 17 is His prayer to the Father. In chapter 18, He's arrested. In chapter 19 and 20, He dies and rises again. Chapter 21 is sending the disciples and recovering Peter.

So while we're halfway through the story, chronologically, as John lays it out; in the reality of the life of Christ, we're just a few months from the very end. All that to say that starting with chapter 11, we begin to see the drama at its highest peak as we move toward the cross and the resurrection.

Chapter 10 is John's final picture of Jesus' public ministry. Final picture. We started way back with John the Baptist introducing Jesus as the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. We started with Jesus beginning His public ministry, calling His disciples. We saw miracles that He did, that demonstrated His deity, words that He said in which He claimed to be God, the I Am.

Now, we remember that the purpose of John is not to give us every detail about the life of Jesus. John closes his gospel by saying: "If He wrote down everything that Jesus did, the books of the world couldn't contain it." So what we have here is a short look at the life of Christ with a specific purpose. And the purpose is given in chapter 20 and verse 31. These have been written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that believing, you may have life in His name. There's a historical element that you may know that He is the Son of God. There's a spiritual element that you may believe and have eternal life. That's John's purpose. There's plenty here to prove Jesus is the Messiah, the long-awaited anointed king that God will send, the redeemer. There's enough here to know that He is God in human flesh. There's enough here to believe that, and believing it, have eternal life. That's John's purpose.

So, the opening 10 chapters of this gospel lay out primarily the claims of Jesus. John starts in chapter 1. "The Word was with God. The Word was God. The Word became flesh." That's John's testimony. We have the testimony of John the Baptist concerning the Messiah, the redeemer, the Lamb of God. We have the testimony of the early apostles. We have found Him. We have found

Him. We have found the one who is Messiah, the Son of God. The whole purpose of John's gospel is to declare the deity of Jesus Christ. This then, in chapter 10, is the clearest, most explicit statement of the deity of Christ.

Look at verse 30 of John 10. "I and the Father are one." I and the Father are one. The one-ness that Jesus is claiming is not one-ness in purpose. It is not one-ness in mission. It is not one-ness in theological agreement. The one-ness that he is talking about is one-ness in nature, one-ness in essence, one-ness in being. That has clearly been declared through the whole of the epistle. John 1:1, "In the beginning was the Word. The Word was with God. The Word was God." Verse 14, "The Word became flesh, dwelled among us. We saw His glory." What glory was it? The glory as of the *protokos*, the premier one, from the Father, full of grace and truth. Declaration of His absolute deity.

In the fifth chapter, you remember verse 17. He said, "My Father is working until now, and I Myself am working. I do what the Father does. I have the prerogatives, the authority, the right, the power, the being to do exactly what God does." "They understood what He was saying," verse 18, "for this reason, therefore, the Jews were seeking all the more to kill Him because He not only was breaking the Sabbath, but also was calling God His own Father, making Himself equal with God." So let the Jews tell us, the enemies of Jesus, what He meant when He called Himself Son of God. They knew what He meant. He was claiming to have the same essence as God as a son has the same essence as his father.

In that same fifth chapter, there are statements to this effect that are unmistakable. Verse 23, "So that all will honor the Son, even as they honor the Father. He who doesn't honor the Son doesn't honor the Father who sent Him. As the Father has life in Himself, even so He gave to the Son also to have life in Himself. He has equal life, does equal work, has equal authority, has equal power, because He is equal." Now, this infuriated the Jews. This claim to deity, as we all know. And as a result, they try to kill Him. They try to kill Him on the spot. Their fury reaches a fever pitch where they become like a mass of vigilantes that want to snuff out His life. And by the time we get to the end of chapter 10, for the fourth time, they will have designs on killing Him on the spot, and He will have to escape. Verse 39 of chapter 10 tells us that.

At the end of chapter 8, they picked up stones to throw at Him, but Jesus hid Himself and went out of the temple. At the end of chapter 10, verse 39, "They were seeking again to seize Him, and He eluded their grasp." Back in chapter 7, just as another illustration, verse 1, "The Jews were seeking to kill Him." This is a steady, relentless desire on their part to reach some escalated moment when, in the eyes of the crowds, they will be justified in executing Him on the spot. They knew exactly what He was intending to say when He said He was the Son of God. They knew He was claiming the same essence as God. That's how they used the expression, "son of." If someone was called a son of Belial, he would be manifesting the same wicked nature as Satan. If someone was called, as James and John were, sons of thunder, it meant that they had a volatility. They had a disposition of volatility. To say you're the Son of God is to claim to have the same essence as God Himself.

In John 1 verse 34, the testimony of John, "I myself have seen and testified that this is the Son of God." In John chapter 1 verse 49, Nathaniel says, "Rabbi, You are the Son of God." This is how clearly Jesus had declared who He was. It was absolutely unmistakable. So when we come to chapter 10, we're not at all surprised that this has become a huge issue. Verse 31, Jesus makes the most clear, precise declaration. "I and the Father are one." Verse 31, "The Jews picked up stones

again to stone Him.” Jesus stops them. He answered and said, “I showed you many good works from the Father; for which of them are you stoning Me?” The Jews answered Him, “For a good work we do not stone You, but for blasphemy; and because You, being a man, make Yourself out to be God.”

They had no doubt what He was claiming, absolutely no doubt. They had come to understand that Jesus was claiming to be God, the great I Am, the creator Himself, the one true eternal God in human flesh. The other writers of the gospels affirm this. Matthew in chapter 1 verse 23 introduces the child as Emmanuel, which is God with us. Mark 1:1, Mark begins his history, “The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.” Luke launches in chapter 1, a description of the birth of the child, and identifies the child as the Holy Child the Son of God. John 1:1, “He was God.”

Listen, any identification, any identification of Jesus by anyone, anytime, that makes Him less than God is blasphemy. It is blasphemy. The leaders of Israel had turned blasphemy on its head. They had turned Jesus into a blasphemer when they were the blasphemers for denying His deity. They accused Him of blasphemy, and they knew that blasphemy, genuine blasphemy had a death penalty placed upon it. Leviticus 24:16, “The blasphemer is to be stoned to death.”

In their minds, Jesus was a blasphemer; in reality, they were the blasphemers. So is anyone who denies the nature of Christ as God. John certainly features this in his gospel, but he also is clear about it in his epistle. “Who is the liar but the one who denies that Jesus is the Christ?” This is the anti-Christ. The one who denies the Father and the Son. Whoever denies the Son does not have the Father; the one who confesses the Son has the Father. You get the Son and the Father as one, or you are cursed. You are cursed. You are a blasphemer. You are anti-Christ. Any view of Christ that is less than God is an anti-Christ statement. It was for blasphemy, really, in the end, that these leaders of Israel had dogged His steps and eventually got Him to a Roman cross. It was blasphemy.

At the end of chapter 22 of Luke, Jesus is before the Sanhedrin, and they say to Him, “Are You the Son of God then?” And He said to them, “Yes, I am.” Yes, I am. And He said the I Am, the name of God again. And then they said, “What further need do we have of testimony? We have heard it ourselves from His own mouth.” And the whole body of them got up and brought Him before Pilate, and they trumped up some lie about Him overthrowing Caesar to get Pilate involved. But it was blasphemy that they accused Him of because He said He was God. So, here again, as we look at John 10, it’s the same issue. John 19:7 puts it this way: “The Jews said we have a law,” Leviticus 24:16, “and by that law, He ought to die because He made Himself out to be the Son of God.” Execution because of blasphemy.

Now, at this point, we’re in John 10, the blasphemy is fixed. And Jesus is not the blasphemer; they are. Here is John’s final scene in our Lord’s public ministry. He has displayed His deity through His words and works. Day after day after day, three years across Israel, words clearly from heaven. No one ever spoke like Him. Works clearly from heaven. Nicodemus summed it up when he said, “No one can do the things You do unless God is with Him.” But the nation of Israel, the Jews, led by the apostate sons of Satan who had devised and perpetrated a damning form of Judaism were producing sons of hell. And collectively, the nation rejects Christ in the face of all the evidence.

This was prophesied, by the way. This was no surprise at all. Because if you go back to that beloved Isaiah 53, it begins prophetically at the arrival of Christ, “Who has believed our message,

and to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed.” A prophecy that they wouldn’t believe and they didn’t. Then Isaiah goes on to say: we looked at Him and He was nothing. He was less than nothing. We esteemed Him not. We hid our faces from Him. He was despicable. The whole nation had been led by its leaders to see Him as a blasphemer. And by the way, He is either God, or He is a blasphemer. There’s really nothing in the middle.

The constant rejection of the leaders and the people has been chronicled in every chapter of John. In chapter 1, He came unto His own, His own received Him not. In chapter 2, there’s a massive conflict between Him and the leaders of Israel when He goes in and assaults the corruption of the temple. We see the same hostility in chapter 3. We see it again in 4. We see it in 5. We see it 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12. And 12 is the last chapter before the upper room discourse. So at the very end of public encounters during Passion Week, the same hateful hostility exists. It culminates here in chapter 10 so that in verses 22 to 42, this final section, we really see John summing up the rejection of the Son of God, the Messiah, by the people of Israel.

There are five scenes here, and I don’t want to rush through them. There’s so much profound theological truth here. We just need to be careful. So let’s see if we can at least get as far as we did in the previous service. The first scene is confrontation. I’ll just call it, we’ll give you some C’s as we go. Confrontation. And confrontation happened all the time, all the time. And by the way, we’re in the feast section of John’s gospel; it started in chapter 5. Chapter 5 verse 1. And John is showing these confrontations, these encounters, these points of rejection at feasts. We’re in Jerusalem, we’re in the temple, and the feasts, you remember, starting in chapter 5, again in chapter 7, and now as we come to chapter 10, verse 22, there’s another feast. So, we’re in the season of feasts, and John uses those for the episodes that describe this rejection.

Now, just a word to say about confrontations. The leaders of Israel confronted Jesus frequently. You see that in Matthew, Mark, and Luke, as well as John. They like to confront Him with a question. So we’ll say, this is confrontation by means of an inquiry. They would come and ask a question. Now you might say, “Well, that’s a good thing.” Except for the fact that they had such corrupt motives. They had no desire for information. They had no desire for clarification. They only wanted to put Him in a public situation where He would say something that was so blasphemous, they would be justified in taking His life.

This is a common reality. They ask the right question, and I’ll give them credit for that. The rich young ruler asks the right question. Nicodemus asks the right question. Many of the people that came to Jesus, scribes, lawyers, Pharisees, Sadducees. They ask the right question. They ask the right question to the right person. They always got the right answer, and they always defiantly rejected that answer. So there’s a pretense in their scholarship, you might say. This is not a noble effort to clarify or to find truth. This is simply a trap they’re forever trying to set to catch Him, to catch Him. The leaders of Israel see Jesus as the single most formidable enemy they have ever known or could ever imagine. There’s never been an enemy like Him. Never. And if you remember in John 8, Jesus said to the leaders of Israel and all who followed them: you are of your father, the devil. You do what your father does. You obey your father. He’s a liar. You’re a liar. He’s a murderer. You’re a murderer. He’s a deceiver. You’re a deceiver. You’re of your father, the devil. And since Jesus is God, and is absolute purity, absolute holiness, absolute truth, He is the greatest enemy they will ever experience. They don’t see it clearly that way, but that’s reality.

The pattern then, is familiar. They confront Him. They propose a question. He answers the

question, reiterates His claim to be the Son of God, to be the Messiah. They react with unbelief, fury, anger, seek to grab Him, kill Him on the spot, and He escapes. In chapter 10, for the fourth time.

And it happened at these feasts. And the reason they made issues out of these feasts, and John makes issues out of them, is because that would be a place where they could get some public outcry going. They could manipulate the crowd.

So let's look at the setting. Verse 22. At that time it was the Feast of Dedication that took place in Jerusalem. All the great feasts took place there. You might not have heard of the Feast of Dedication. If you're looking for the Feast of Dedication in the Old Testament, it's not there. It's not an Old Testament feast. It's now two months after the Feast of Tabernacles or Booths, which celebrated the wilderness wandering, and that was September, October-ish in the Jewish calendar. So we're now two months later, and this is the Feast of Dedication. This is the last annual feast each year, if you go by our calendar, that the Jews celebrated. It has another name. It is also called Feast of Lights, and the contemporary Jewish word for that is Hanukkah. We all know about Hanukkah. The Jews will be celebrating Hanukkah in a few months as they always do. Why did they call it the Feast of Lights? Because the way they celebrated it was to light candles and lamps in all their houses as a symbol of their celebration. It always happens on the Jewish calendar, 25th day of Kislev, which is a November, December calendar time. 25th day of Kislev.

While it's not an Old Testament feast, it has a very interesting tradition that predates the New Testament. You do remember that between the Old Testament and the New Testament, there's a 400 year period. We refer to it obviously as the intertestamental period. The last prophet in the Old Testament goes silent. There's no prophecy, no revelation, until John the Baptist shows up, and the word of the Lord comes to Zechariah and Elizabeth about John, and then you have the story of Christ. But in the middle, there's 400 years. That was 400 very, very difficult years for the Jews. Very difficult. They were apostate. They rejected God, went through lots of judgment, lots of suffering. But it sort of reached an epic level around 170 years before Christ. So, 160 to 170 BC. A man came along, a Syrian monarch. Very powerful Syrian monarch. Syria is not a new enemy to Israel. This Syrian monarch was named Antiochus. He was like all of them. He was a narcissistic, self-promoting madman. And so he called himself Antiochus Epiphanes, which means Antiochus the supreme one. The people changed one letter and called him Antiochus Epimanes, which means "The Madman."

So this Syrian ruler, Antiochus, a powerful ruler. A devotee of Greek culture, and he wants power over Israel. He wants what the modern Syrians want, what the modern Middle-Eastern Arabic world wants. He wants Israel. And he is the first pagan king who ever persecuted Jews for their religion. He's the first. He was a devotee of Greek culture, which means he was polytheistic, multiple gods. In 167 BC, he made a law. And he imposed that law on everybody, and it was a law that was essentially called Hellenization, from the Greek word, *Hellinis*, which means Greek, or nations, or Gentiles. He wanted to Hellenize everybody. He wanted to standardize everybody, and the Jews wouldn't accept pagan religion. So he entered Jerusalem with a mighty force in 170 BC, and he conquered the temple, and he immediately went inside the temple into the holy of holies, and slaughtered a pig in the holy of holies. Then, he erected a statue of Zeus there. That was the start of a systematic effort to stamp out Judaism. He was brutal in his oppression of the Jews. And by the way, as they always do, they clung tenaciously to their religion. Under his direction, they were slaughtered. They were required to make sacrifices to pagan gods or die, like convert to Islam or have your head chopped off today in Iraq. Nothing new.

That's because the devil is a murderer. They were not allowed to carry, to read, or possess any portion of Old Testament Scripture. Whenever Old Testament scrolls could be found, they were collected and burned. They were forbidden to give any kind of honor on the Sabbath day. They were forbidden to circumcise their children. Savage persecution called the pious Jews to revolt as you would expect, fight back. They were led by a priest named Mattathias. And Mattathias had sons. One of his sons was a man named Judas Maccabeus. Under the leadership of this really effective, powerful warrior-leader, Judas Maccabeus, they retook, the Jews retook Jerusalem. And interestingly enough, it was on the 25th of Kislev that they liberated the temple, rededicated it, and established the Feast of Dedication to commemorate the liberation of the temple, the rededication of the temple. There's some historical information that Antiochus did what he did on the 25th of Kislev, and they liberated it on the 25th of Kislev years later.

So that date became an important date. There is a book in the Apocrypha called 2 Maccabees that gives a historical look at that event. Let me read it to you. "Now Maccabeus and his followers, the Lord leading them on, recovered the temple and the city; tore down the altars which had built in the public square by the foreigners, and also destroyed their sacred precincts. They purified the sanctuary, made another altar of sacrifice; then, striking fire out of flint, they offered sacrifices, after a lapse of two years, and they burned incense and lighted lamps and set out the bread of the Presence." The bread that would be placed in the holy of holies. "And when they had done this, they fell prostrate and besought the Lord that they might never again fall into such misfortunes, but that, if they should ever sin, they might be disciplined by him with forbearance and not be handed over to blasphemous and barbarous nations. It happened that on the same day on which the sanctuary had been profaned by the foreigners, the purification of the sanctuary took place, that is, on the twenty-fifth day of the same month, which was Kislev. And they celebrated it for eight days with rejoicing, in the manner of the Feast of Tabernacles, remembering how not long before, during the Feast of Tabernacles, they had been wandering in the mountains and caves like wild animals. Therefore bearing ivy-wreathed wands and beautiful branches and also fronds of palm, they offered hymns of thanksgiving to him who had given success to the purifying of his own holy place. They decreed by public ordinance and vote that the whole nation of the Jews should observe these days every year."

So, that note on history, from 2 Maccabees, is the establishing of the Feast of Dedication. Now let's go back to John. It is then, the 25th of Kislev, and the Feast of Dedication is being celebrated at Jerusalem. Commemorating this great deliverance, the Feast of Lights, Hanukkah. Then verse 23 says this: "It was winter." That's very stark. "It was winter." When I read that earlier in the week, I just kind of stopped there and thought about it. It was winter not only on the calendar, November, December, but it was winter spiritually. The Son of righteousness who had arisen with healing in His beams had run His orbit and faded back to blackness. It was winter on the calendar, and it was winter in the hearts of the Jews.

Because it was winter, Jesus was walking in the temple in the portico of Solomon. I told you in our study of Acts, that's mentioned in Acts 4 and 5. When the Babylonians destroyed Jerusalem, 586, they destroyed the temple. But they didn't destroy that back wall on the eastern side that 600 feet of retaining wall. That was left from the original Solomonic temple. And so it was called the porch of Solomon. In front of that wall, they built a great patio porch, put 40 foot high colonnades and a roof, and that's where people would need to go when they came to the temple if it was winter. And in the winter in Israel, it can rain. It can become very cold. It can snow in Jerusalem at the altitude. Winter

becomes a little bit of a metaphor of the spiritual reality.

So Jesus is walking in that part of the temple which is all that was left of the massive, glorious temple of Solomon. This was His final public appearance. The rest is going to be private. Verse 40 says, after this, He went away. He went away. He went away for three months. When He came back, it was raise Lazarus, come into the city; a week later, crucifixion, resurrection.

This is a very significant moment. It really is winter. So, they are celebrating their great human deliverer while murdering their Savior. Amazing. Amazing.

The confrontation, as I said, begins with a question. Verse 24. "The Jews then gathered around Him, and were saying to him, 'How long will You keep us in suspense? If You are the Messiah, tell us plainly.'" You know, that is just so hypocritical. How long will You keep us in suspense? Wait a minute. They'd already tried to kill Him three times. When He said before, Abraham was, I Am. They picked up stones to throw at Him, to snuff out His life. They knew exactly who He claimed to be. But again, this is all pretense to extract a blasphemous declaration by which they can enact their violence.

How long will You keep us in suspense? Just drips with sarcasm. If You're the Messiah, tell us plainly. By the way, He's been gone for two months. Between verse 21 and 22 is two months. From the prior feast to this one, we've gone from September-October to November-December, and all it takes is for Him to show up, and their hate is initially activated. It's as if they held onto that hate at such a fever pitch that just the sight of Him activated the confrontation. How deep is their hatred that after two months, their desire to kill Him is completely activated by just the sight of Him. He had made claims to being God, to being the Son of God over, and over, and over. We've read them in chapter 5. We've seen them in chapter 6. We've seen them in chapter 8. They were constant. Calling Himself the Son of God constantly through His whole ministry. So, their question is really a fraud. There's no integrity.

So, the first scene here then is the confrontation, and that confrontation is marked by an inquiry. The second scene then comes in verse 25 and following. It's the claim. That's the pattern. They have a question; He makes a claim. The claim is deity. The claim is deity. But before He makes that claim explicitly in verse 30, let's just, and wow, we're out of time, but that's all right. Look at verse 25. I'll be back. Verse 25. So will you. "Jesus answered them, 'I told you; you don't believe.'" That's the problem. You don't believe. I told you. You don't believe. And not only did I tell you, but "the works that I do in my Father's name, these testify of Me". But you do not believe.

Stop right there at that point in verse 26. I told you. I told you. You don't believe. The works that I do testify, but you don't believe. This is the point, folks. They don't believe. Why? You say, well, all that evidence; all those miracles, Nicodemus, you know, "No man can do what You do except God, be with Him." You're a teacher sent from God. Why don't they believe? Let's go back to John 3. We'll close on this principle. John 3:16. "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life." Okay. You believe. That's why John wrote this gospel, that you might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing, you might have eternal life in His name. Okay. So if you believe, you have eternal life. Verse 17. God didn't send His Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world might be saved through Him. He who believes in Him is not judged. He who does not believe has been judged already because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. It's clear

who He is. It's clear who He claimed to be. He is God in human flesh. He has the same nature as God. Believe that. But this is the judgment that the light has come into the world, and here's why they don't believe. Men loved darkness rather than light for their deeds were evil. And everyone who does evil hates the light, and doesn't come to the light for fear that his deeds will be exposed.

Why don't people believe? It's not because there's not evidence. It's because they hate the light. Because the light exposes their sin. Why are people angry with Christians? Why do people persecute Christians? For the very same reason that they persecuted Jesus. Jesus says this. The world hates Me because I testify of it that its deeds are evil. John 7:7. That is a definitive statement. Do you want to know why the world is hostile toward us? Because we testify that the deeds of the world are evil. They don't want to hear that. Adulterers don't want to hear that. Homosexuals don't want to hear that. Liars, thieves don't want to hear that. Corrupt people don't want to hear that. Why? Because they love the darkness. Their deeds are evil. They love their sin. It is the love of sin that produces unbelief. And you can unload evidence, but unless the heart is turned to hate sin, there's not going to be any faith.

These Jewish people, like all people, love sin. On the other hand, Jesus said this in John 7:17. "If anyone is willing to do God's will, he will know of the teaching, whether it's of God, or whether I speak from Myself." What makes the difference? If you love your sin, you will hate the gospel. If you desire to do the will of God, which means you hunger for righteousness, you will know the truth and you will believe it.

Listen, you can talk about apologetics all you want; you can talk about defenses of the faith all you want. It's a sin issue. The evidence is in. The evidence is clear. The life of Christ manifestly declared that He is God in human flesh. There is no other explanation. Men love sin, and they hate righteousness, and they hate anyone who testifies about their sin. Why, in our culture, are people so angry at Christianity? Because we testify that their deeds are evil. We don't have a choice. And until they accept that testimony, they will not run into the arms of God. You don't believe. You hate Me because I tell you what you have to hear, what you must hear, but what you hate to hear.

The one thing Christianity can't do is change its message, stop being offensive. We are the most offensive people on the planet with the most outrageously offensive message that's ever been given by anyone. We testify to people that their deeds are evil, that they love their sin, and their darkness, and that judgment will take them to hell. That's our message. It is the love of sin, and the hatred of righteousness that produces unbelief, even when all the evidence is there.

And oh, by the way, there's another thing. End of verse 26. You don't believe because you're not My sheep. Hmmm. Be here next week. I'll tell you why He said that. Let's pray.

Our hearts are certainly moved by the truth. It comes across with such clarity and such power, such urgency. It's not possible really to think about these things without reverence, without a sense of holy fear, the seriousness of matters that relate to the soul. I can only pray, Lord, that this message, this truth heard today or any other time in the future will be useful to the Spirit of God, to alarm sinners, alarm the unconverted, terrify those who are in the darkness and love the darkness. The light has come. The Son of righteousness rose with healing in His beams. The Son of righteousness ran a magnificent, blazing, brilliant orbit of life around Israel. And men chose the darkness, and then it was winter, and the light was God. Even Jesus Himself said the light would go out.

Lord, we look at the world around us, and we thank You that Your grace is still extended to sinners. It has been to us. We ask that the light would shine again brightly in our world, that the people of the light would be faithful to the hard message, as well as to the compassionate message of grace that comes behind it. We ask that You would be glorified by opening the hearts of sinners, shattering the darkness, bringing in the light. May the light of the glorious gospel of Jesus Christ shine in the hearts of many, dispelling the darkness, the love of sin, and replacing it with the love of righteousness, with forgiveness and eternal life.

Father, we again are grateful for a wonderful time of worship today. We thank You for lifting us up, for elevating us above the mundane. Bless every life here, every soul, and accomplish Your will through each one, to the praise of Your glory, we pray in Christ's name. Amen.

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