

Jesus claims soul-saving power like GOD

During the secular Feast of Dedication or ‘Hanukkah,’ (about December) the Jews celebrated the Maccabean revolt that gave them freedom from the Seleucids in 164 BC. While not in the Torah, Jesus arrives in Jerusalem and uses it as an opportunity to reach people. *Use cultural movements to promote spiritual moments!* Being winter, Jesus taught under a covered porch surrounding the Temple, giving people shelter with excellent acoustics. As Jesus began to teach, the religious leaders looked for a reason to arrest him. Confronting their stubborn unbelief, Jesus claimed divine power to save those who believe in him. Believers are safe and secure in the hands of their Savior. *There’s more grace in God than there is sin in you!*

The leaders REFUSE to believe Jesus

Jesus didn’t just make claims, he verified his claims with miracles, yet they *refused* to believe. Though there was enough evidence to ‘know and understand’ that Jesus was sent from God, the religious leader’s hearts wouldn’t allow them to submit to the truth. *The truth either softens the heart to God or hardens the heart away from Him.* Hearing Jesus say that they were not of his ‘flock’ and that he and God the Father are ‘one,’ they pick up stones to kill him. *Extreme disbelief can lead to extreme decisions* (John 16:1-3)!

Jesus claimed to be EQUAL to God

Jesus sarcastically asks which miracle they want to kill him for, knowing it wasn’t against the Law to do miracles. They respond it wasn’t for doing ‘good works’ but for claiming he and God (two separate persons) are ‘one’ (Gr. *hen*, ‘numerical or united oneness’), thus being equal to each other. Assuming he was lying, this carried the death penalty for blasphemy (Lev. 24:14-16). *Sometimes the truth can be inconvenient when we don’t want to hear it!* In the Torah, God revealed Himself as plural (Gen. 1:26; 3:22; Is. 6:8). In the Shema, the Hebrew word for ‘one’ (Heb. *echad*, ‘united, one, first,’ not *yachid*, ‘only, solitary one’; Deut. 6:4) can mean united plurality. There is only one God, made up of three united Persons—the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—who are separate in *personhood* but share the same *nature* (the tri-unity or ‘trinity’ of God). *We worship Jesus because he is God and saves us as God* (Heb. 1:3)!