

John 59 – Believe the Works

09/07/2025

Scripture 1: (Jn. 10:22-11:1 ESV)

At that time the Feast of Dedication took place at Jerusalem. It was winter, and Jesus was walking in the temple, in the colonnade of Solomon.

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."

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, but you do not believe because you are not among my sheep. My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand. My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand. I and the Father are one."

The Jews picked up stones again to stone him.

Jesus answered them, "I have shown you many good works from the Father; for which of them are you going to stone me?"

The Jews answered him, "It is not for a good work that we are going to stone you but for blasphemy, because you, being a man, make yourself God."

Jesus answered them, "Is it not written in your Law, 'I said, you are gods'? If he called them gods to whom the word of God came-- and Scripture cannot be broken-- do you say of him whom the Father consecrated and sent into the world, 'You are blaspheming,' because I said, 'I am the Son of God'? If I am not doing the works of my Father, then do not believe me; but if I do them, even though you do not believe me, believe the works, that you may know and understand that the Father is in me and I am in the Father."

Again they sought to arrest him, but he escaped from their hands. He went away again across the Jordan to the place where John had been baptizing at first, and there he remained. And many came to him. And they said, "John did no sign, but everything that John said about this man was true." And many believed in him there.

Scripture 2: (1 Cor. 12:27-13:13 ESV)

Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it. And God has appointed in the church first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healing, helping, administrating, and various kinds of tongues. Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles? Do all possess gifts of healing? Do all speak with tongues? Do all interpret? But earnestly desire the higher gifts. And I will show you a still more excellent way.

If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. If I give away all I have, and if I deliver up my body to be burned, but have not love, I gain nothing.

Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never ends.

As for prophecies, they will pass away; as for tongues, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will pass away. For

we know in part and we prophesy in part, but when the perfect comes, the partial will pass away. When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I gave up childish ways. For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I have been fully known. So now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; but the greatest of these is love.

Sermon:

Moving on to now describe another separate, later, but related occasion during Jesus' Jerusalem ministry, the Evangelist provides us with a marker showing us the time and place, "*At that time the Feast of Dedication took place at Jerusalem. It was winter; and Jesus was walking in the temple, in the colonnade of Solomon.*". Previously, I have spoken at greater length about this "*Feast of Dedication*", which has become *Chanukah*, explaining both its historical context and its later mythological (and actually not miraculous) character, so I will refrain from repeating it. John's specific mention of this Feast, which correlates with the modern celebration of Chanukah, achieves two important purposes:

1. The narrative purpose of the feast establishes a specific time: winter, sometime in mid-December. This emphasizes the shortness of time remaining for Jesus's earthly ministry, only being three or four months away from His crucifixion. This occasion also brought the period of Jesus's Jerusalem teaching ministry, begun in John 7 with the Feast of Booths, to a close.
2. The interpretive purpose of the feast relates to it being a remembrance of the Temple's reconsecration by the Hasmoneans. This festival celebrated the re-lighting of the Golden Menorah (Exodus 25:31-39), which was a visual interpretation of the LORD as the "*light of the world*" (John (8:12, 9:5). John used this occasion to emphasize how Jesus, as God the Son, was dwelling in the midst of His people (as the LORD did in the wilderness Tabernacle), and how He was their guiding (shepherding) light leading them to the true Promise Land, both of which underscored the truth of His divinity.

While those are two "Big Picture" concerns in this passage, there was something else happening in this story that is important for us to understand, in our present. It concerns the relationships between faith and evidence: not the evidence of our having faith but, the evidence supporting our faith. The relationship between having *pisteo* in Jesus as the Messiah and, of not having *pisteo* faith: of not believing in or, of not trusting Him and His Word.

During this festival, sometime while Jesus was up on the Temple mount, walking within the Temple precincts, about as close to the "Holy of Holies" as a person could safely be, the Jews gathered around Jesus and bluntly asked Him, "*How long will you keep us in suspense? If you are the Christ, tell us plainly.*". They asked Him a straight-forward question and they were hoping for a straight-forward answer. But, "*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, but you do not believe because you are not among my sheep. My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me.'*" Jesus again repeated His sheep and shepherd metaphor, suggesting that it was a commonly use analogy, reminding us of the necessity of sovereign, divine election coupled with the internal working of the Holy Spirit in regeneration before a person may respond positively to Christ in faith. But these Jews still would not believe Jesus because they were not His sheep. Then Jesus continued, "*I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand. My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand.*". First, Jesus claimed to offer His followers eternal life, and then He said, "*I and the Father are one.*". There was no possible way for Him to say, "I am God." more plainly than that. There could be no doubt about what Jesus implied and meant and there was no plausible, alternative understanding.

So, violently reacting to His claim, "*The Jews picked up stones again to stone him.*", performing the technically proper response, according to Torah (Leviticus 24:10-16). But, before they could begin throwing their stones, Jesus asked them, "*I have shown you many good works from the Father; for which of them are you going to stone me?*"

The Jews answered him, "It is not for a good work that we are going to stone you but for blasphemy, because you, being a man, make yourself God." Proving, yet again, that they did not understand what Jesus was doing.

But, Jesus's final answer on the subject was this, *"If I am not doing the works of my Father, then do not believe me; but if I do them, even though you do not believe me, believe the works, that you may know and understand that the Father is in me and I am in the Father."* They did not want to believe Jesus. They did not want to trust what He was saying. So ultimately, Jesus pointed outside of Himself. He said, "Don't just take My word for it." He did not want them to trust what might have merely been words and "empty air". He pointed to things that were more tangible and substantial than words. He pointed to evidence that could not be argued against or denied convincingly, like: the wedding guests who enjoyed the wine, the experience of those who ate the loaves and fishes, all of the many people who were healed at His command or touch, and the granting of sight to a man born blind. Jesus redirected them to consider His miracles, *"the works of [His] Father"*. The extraordinary things which were happening all around Him.

- If they were not yet willing or able to believe all that He had said and taught or claimed, then they should believe these proofs that had been set before them.
- If they were willing and able to believe those extraordinary miracles, at least, then they would *"...know and understand that the Father is in me and I am in the Father."*
- All because His miraculous works supported the truth of what He taught and supported His claim of divinity.

This final argument by Jesus, was predicated on the example of the Old Testament Scriptures and in the for of His lesser, typological predecessors in redemptive history: Moses and Aaron, and Elijah and Elisha. He gave them the same kind of evidence to believe was which convinced the Pharisees to believe Moses. Previously, the Pharisees had told the formerly blind man, *"We know that God has spoken to Moses, but as for this man, we do not know where he comes from."* (Jn. 9:28-29 ESV). But how did they know that God had spoken to Moses? They believed in the miracles that Moses had performed before Pharaoh and the Israelites. Similarly, this final argument relied upon the miraculous evidence and what the true purpose and meaning of miracles is.

Since Jesus instructed us to *"believe the works"*, what should His miracles cause us to believe? But to do that, first, we need to consider three questions: "Are miracles normal occurrences in the Bible?", "How often do we read about miracles actually occurring in Scripture?", and "Do similar miracles still occur?"; the answers may surprise you. The first answer is, "No", the second is, "Not often, and far less frequently than Christians ordinarily assume.", and the third answer is an emphatic "No."

When a person searches their ESV Bible, they will find the word "miracle" once, "miracles" eleven times, and miraculous twice¹; only fourteen examples of "miracle" across the sixty-six books of our English Bible. But, since there are so many more such recorded events, we really need to define what we actually mean by our use of the term "miracle".

If you will pause to think about it, you will realize that we are surrounded by miracles. It is a proper Christian perspective and attitude for us to observe and identify miraculous occurrences all around us. These are what we might call "ordinary miracles". Ordinary miracles are wondrous, common place things that happen regularly and may become predictable and expected. They are often taken for granted and overlooked.

- The natural healing process is miraculous.
- The generation of life observed across a woman's pregnancy and process of giving birth is miraculous.

¹miracle - Exodus 7:9; miracles - Exodus 4:21, 1 Chronicles 16:12, Psalm 105:5+27, Acts 8:13, Acts 19:11, 1 Corinthians 12:10+28+29, Galatians 3:5, Hebrews 2:4; miraculous - Matthew 14:2, Mark 6:14

- The process of respiration, of breathing, both our ability and the suitability of the earth's atmosphere for it, is miraculous.
- Sunshine and the visual appearance of a rainbow, of light passing through water droplets, are miraculous, and so is the fact that the Sun's solar energy does not scour the face of the earth clean of all signs of life.

Yet such “ordinary miracles” are not what are intended by Scripture. Those are “extraordinary miracles”, instead.

While “miracle” is not commonly used in the English Bible, the expression more commonly used for such “extraordinary miracles” is “*signs and wonders*”². It is most often used within the Old Testament in specific reference to the “*signs and wonders*” performed for Pharaoh. It was used pejoratively in the Synoptic Gospels to describe the evidences offered by false christs, as mockeries of God's true power. John uses it to compare the works of Jesus with the works of Moses, and the other the New Testament writings use it to describe the miraculous work of Jesus and the Apostles. Both expressions describe extraordinary displays of divine power which are otherwise unexplainable and impossible to perform or recreate through any ordinary, human means.

However, we must also be careful to distinguish “acts of God” from “signs and wonders”. Causally, while all miracles are “acts of God”, every sign or wonder occurred with human involvement; enough so that the miracle could become associated with a particular person. But, what distinguishes between the two is that “acts of God” can only be attributed to the LORD. While the “ten wonders” (or plagues) performed in Egypt were obviously “acts of God”, their miraculous occurrence was attributed to Moses (Exodus 11:10),

- Creation was obviously an “act of God” (Genesis 1).
- The destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah was a clear “act of God” (Genesis 19).
- Jonah's rescue by a fish was an “act of God” (Jonah 1-2).
- The destruction of Sennacherib's army was an “act of God” (Isaiah 37).
- The turning back of the shadow on the “*dial of Ahaz*” was an “act of God” (Isaiah 38).
- The miraculous preservation of Shadrach, Meshach, Abednego, and Daniel were “acts of God” (Daniel 3, 6) because, like Jonah, these men were simply the beneficiaries of a miracle.

What does Scripture say the purpose was for each of these miracles or, was their mere performance their entire purpose?

- The LORD told Moses, “*When Pharaoh says to you, 'Prove yourselves by working a miracle,' then you shall say to Aaron, 'Take your staff and cast it down before Pharaoh, that it may become a serpent.'*” (Exod. 7:9 ESV). Moses's authority and role was proven by his miracles, by his “signs and wonders”.
- Paul told the church in Corinth that, “*The signs of a true apostle were performed among you with utmost patience, with signs and wonders and mighty works.*” (2 Cor. 12:12 ESV). “Signs and wonders” proved whether someone was an apostle.
- The author of Hebrews described the record of Scripture, writing “*It was declared at first by the Lord, and it was attested to us by those who heard, while God also bore witness by signs and wonders and various miracles and by gifts of the Holy Spirit distributed according to his will.*” (Heb. 2:3b-4 ESV). The Word of God, Scripture, was proven true by “signs and wonders”.

²“signs and wonders” - Exod. 7:3, Deut. 4:34, 6:22, 7:19, 26:8, 29:3, 34:11, Neh. 9:10, Ps. 135:9, Jer. 32:20, 21, Dan. 4:2, 3, 6:27, Matt. 24:24, Mk. 13:22, Jn. 4:48, Acts 2:19, 22, 43, 4:30, 5:12, 6:8, 7:36, 14:3, 15:12, Rom. 15:19, 2 Cor. 12:12, 2 Thess. 2:9, Heb. 2:4

So, the Biblically stated purpose of miracles was to “prove” a messenger and their message. Miracles were their “credentials”: visible demonstrations of the power or authority that a messenger was invested with. Miracles were evidences that proved a messenger's credibility and testified to the truthfulness of their message.

But, if I am correct and such miracles were not common-place in Scripture, then how often do miracles and their “wonder-workers” appear in Scripture?

There are only three periods in redemptive-history when such “signs and wonders” are recorded.

- First, during the Exodus and the Canaanite conquest when they were performed through Moses, Aaron, and even Joshua (Joshua 10:13). Their miracles repeatedly confirmed the divine authority of these men (Exodus 7-12; Numbers 16 and 17).
- Second, during the reign of the House of Omri, in the Northern Kingdom in the persons of Elijah and Elisha (1 Kings 17-2 Kings 8). All of their many miracles, like: commanding droughts (1 Kings 17), calling fire down from heaven (1 Kings 18), healing leprosy (2 Kings 5), and even raising the dead (2 Kings 4); proved the divine authority of their prophecy and their pronouncements of judgment.
- Thirdly and lastly, during the first century, only during the lifetimes of Jesus and the Apostles (Acts 2:22, 43; Romans 15:18-20; 2 Corinthians 12:12). Their miracles helped to prove the truth of the Gospel message that they preached: of personal repentance, forgiveness for sin, and justification through faith in Jesus Christ alone, according to the LORD's sovereign grace (Ephesians 2:8-10). Furthermore, there are no written testimonies about miracles continuing to be performed by the ancient church fathers in the 2nd or 3rd centuries.

During each of these three periods, the miracles performed confirmed God's messenger's and His divine message. Afterwards, God's people were left to trust in His Word, to believe His Word, and to obey His Word without such extraordinary miracles continuing.

- God's people did not benefit from “signs and wonders” after Joshua died up until the prophets.
- God's people did not benefit from “signs and wonders” after Elisha died until the coming of Jesus Christ. Nevertheless, the Jews who heard Jesus noted that although “*John did no sign... everything that John said about this man was true.*”.
- Therefore, following the death of the last Apostle (whom tradition and history agree was John the Evangelist, the son of Zebedee), just as in prior times, God's people have no Biblical reason to expect that we should continue to experience “signs and wonders”.

Since Christians are indwelt by the Holy Spirit, which should be a big enough miracle, such “sign gifts” are not expected to continue perpetually. The Holy Spirit testifies to us and He helps us to believe without them (John 15:26-7, 16:13-14; 1 John 5:6).

Concerning the question of miracles continuing, the Apostle Paul explains that while every Christian is equally a part of Christ's Church, we do not all equally receive the same gifting nor do we receive the same calling or role of service within the Church. He tells us that “*...God has appointed in the church first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healing, helping, administrating, and various kinds of tongues. Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles? Do all possess gifts of healing? Do all speak with tongues? Do all interpret? But earnestly desire the higher gifts. And I will show you a still more excellent way.*”. So, while the Church has had Apostles, Prophets, and Teachers (Pastors and Elders), every Christian is not called to every role and, since the offices of Apostle and Prophet were both limited in their context, they have naturally ceased. Similarly, since the Christians of the 1st Century did not all receive the gifts of miracle working or supernatural healing but only Jesus and the Apostles {and some Prophets

of old}, those gifts which were specifically associated with them should therefore, be expected to similarly cease.

- The office and authoritative role of Apostle was limited to only those who were called, chosen, and were also direct witnesses of the risen Jesus Christ.
- The office and authoritative role of Prophets was primarily for the purpose of recording the divine special revelation of Scripture.
- Although the prophetic purpose of proclaiming God's Word and forth-telling His truth remains, this duty has transferred to and continues in the office of Teachers.

Furthermore, despite telling us that Christians should desire extraordinary spiritual gifts (1 Corinthians 14:1), the Apostle Paul also warns us that they all would cease, writing “*As for prophecies, they will pass away; as for tongues, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will pass away.*” (1 Cor. 13:8 ESV). Again, these extraordinary gifts and miracles were always only meant to be temporary. They were just given to Christians for a limited season because, after their purpose was achieved, they are no longer necessary.

Proving the point, because “*...tongues are a sign not for believers but for unbelievers, while prophecy is a sign not for unbelievers but for believers.*” (1 Cor. 14:22 ESV) the gifts of “*tongues*” and their interpretation, as desirable as they may have been, were not given for the edification of the Church. The potential benefit of the extraordinary gift of tongues for Christians, is far less than the importance that many people wrongly place on them because these gifts, like the other “*signs and wonders*”, served the same temporary purpose: to confirm the truth of the Gospel and of strengthening their faith in Jesus Christ . Therefore, Christians do not need miraculous evidences to continue today because the authoritative testimony of Scripture is already confirmed. The canon of Scripture is closed and no new revelation is forthcoming, therefore, there is no need for “*signs and wonders*” to continue because there are no Apostles or new Scripture to affirm (Matthew 24:24, 2 Corinthians 11:4, Galatians 1:6-12, 2 Peter 2:1-3, 1 John 4:1-3, Revelation 22:18-21).

So, when Jesus said, “*...believe the works...*”, He meant for His hearers to trust the external, unbiased testimonies that they had already heard about all the many miracles He had done and, for them to comprehend what those miracles represented and meant. Jesus told them that if they did then, they “*...may know and understand that the Father is in me and I am in the Father.*”. But, they were just not wanting to believe what Jesus was saying because it was borderline blasphemous and impossible to accept, according to logic and reason (1 Corinthians 1:22-24). But, testimony from other eye witnesses about Jesus' miracles: from their friends and family or other trusted sources; should have been easier for them to accept and trust. Believing Jesus' miracles: believing that they were credible and that they had actually happened as described; should have helped them to understand the truth: that God the Father was in Him and that He was in God the Father, that Jesus is not only “from God” but also the LORD God, Himself.

If they would just “*...believe the works..*”, then they would not need to take Jesus just at His Word or take it on “faith”. They would have been believing evidence that was plainly set before them and, if they believed that evidence then they would have no choice except to believe everything that Jesus claimed. If a person believed that Jesus had done and was doing all that was claimed about Him, or even just half, then it was reasonable that they should be inclined favorably towards believing in Him. If they would “*...believe the works...*” then, they would believe Jesus the same as they believed Moses.

Yet the Jewish religious leaders remained adamantly opposed to Jesus and His teachings, and so, once again, “*...they sought to arrest him, but he escaped from their hands.*”. Jesus abandoned Jerusalem and again went to “*Bethany across the Jordan*” (John 1:28), where John the Baptist originally ministered and where Jesus was baptized.

Jesus' teaching ministry had now come full circle, concluding where it began. *"And many came to him. And they said, 'John did no sign, but everything that John said about this man was true.' And many believed in him there."* Many of those who had formerly been disciples of John the Baptist began to believe in Jesus as the Christ. They believed the testimony of John, remembering when he had said, *"And I have seen and have borne witness that this is the Son of God."* (Jn. 1:34 ESV). They began to *"...believe the works..."*.

All of those many works confirmed what Jesus publicly declared, that *"My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand."* Therefore, when we believe in Christ, we are trusting that He will fulfill His promise of giving us eternal life and that He will preserve our souls, in both this life and in the next. But, many people object to Christianity because they wrongly assume that our faith is built on a "blind faith". They assume and pejoratively claim we have no evidence to support any of the truth claims in Scripture about Jesus, but they could not be more wrong because the greatest evidence for our hope in God's promise of life is the "empty tomb".

- The fastest and easiest way to disprove the promises and hope of Christianity would be to produce the body of Jesus, but the opposition never has.
- Meanwhile, the body of the Islamic false Prophet, Mohammed, continues to rest in his Saudi Arabian tomb³, visited by millions of his misguided followers every year, demonstrating the hopelessness of their religion.
- Similarly, the remains of the Buddha are enshrined and regularly venerated, although they were divided into eight portions and entombed separately⁴, also demonstrating the hopelessness of their religion.

Likewise, the greatest evidence for our confidence in the truthfulness of the Bible is the continuing testimony of church history and the witness of the ever-increasing number of saints who have gone on before us. Our faith in Jesus Christ is a reasonable faith and our hope in God's promises are supported by far more evidence than most of us realize.

- We have the testimony of lives that have been radically changed and transformed through the Gospel by the Holy Spirit.
- We have the testimony of comfort and peace in a Christian's dying, as opposed to the terror of judgment and fear of the unknown (or the fear of having been wrong).
- While devotees of other religions are sometimes willing to die for the tenets of their faith, only Christians are willing to live for our; sacrificing our own chosen ways and sinful preferences, in obedient submission to the commandments of Christ.
- While many people are willing to live for a known lie, to continue to perpetuate and promote it, no one will willingly die for something they know to be untrue; no one will choose to pay the ultimate price for a known falsehood. Yet all of the Apostles (excepting the Evangelist, John), along with most of the earliest faithful, were condemned and executed (or exiled, in the case of John after a failed execution), because they refused to renounce their faith in Jesus Christ.

Christians have this confidence because we *"believe the works"* that God has done.

- We believe that all of the miracles, which were performed by Jesus and recorded in Scripture (especially His resurrection and ascension), support the truth of His teaching, His claim of divinity, and are the surety of His promises.

³https://madainproject.com/tomb_of_prophet_muhammad

⁴<https://www.thoughtco.com/bones-of-buddha-secrets-of-dead-171317>

- We believe that the miracles recorded in Scripture actually happened as described by the four evangelists in their Gospels, because all of the New Testament writers died asserting their truthfulness, and because their claims were continuously upheld by the eyewitnesses. There are also no claims denying the fact of Jesus's miracles, recorded from antiquity. If there were, Christianity's opposition would surely have produced them since the very beginning.
- We believe that Scripture, and its transmission down through church history, is reliable and true because of all the manuscript evidence from antiquity, which demonstrates the durability of the text and affirms the veracity of its accurate reception. Our Bible agrees with our grandparent's Bible, which agrees with their grandparent's Bible, which agrees with John Calvin's Bible, which agrees with the Bible of Thomas Aquinas, which agrees with the Bible of Augustine, which agrees with the Bible of Athanasius, and which agrees with the Bible of Polycarp and his mentor John, the Evangelist. Translations will vary according to their contemporary conventions, but the “truth of the text” and the “truth within the text” remains the same because it is the inerrant, infallible, authoritative Word of God; because it is the revelation of Jesus Christ, the Son of God and God the Son, the *Logos* who is *Theos* and *Andros*, and is therefore, “...*the same yesterday and today and forever.*” (Heb. 13:8 ESV)

AMEN

Excerpt from “Jesus is the Everlasting Father”, preached on 12/18/2022

“*At that time the Feast of Dedication took place at Jerusalem.*” This is a most peculiar and unique moment in the text of Scripture. The Old Testament Law mandated every male Jew's attendance at three annual religious feasts: Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread (a remembrance of God's act of salvation in the exodus from Egypt), “First fruits” and the Feast of Weeks (Pentecost), and lastly at the completion of the harvest the Feast of Booths (a remembrance of Israel's forty years in the wilderness) (Lev 23; 2 Chron 8:13); while the other two important holy holidays were the Day of Trumpets or Rosh Hashanah (celebrating the LORD's enthronement as Judge and King) and the Day of Atonement or Yom Kippur (the day when Israel's sins were forgiven), but this “Feast of Dedication” is nowhere mentioned in sacred Scripture, except for here. However, you probably know it better by another name, the “Festival of Lights”, Chanukah. The historical origin of the Feast of Dedication, the historical background for the story of Chanukah, is found in the apocryphal book of 1 Maccabees 4:36-59, written ~ 100 BCE.

This festival celebrated the re-dedication of the Second Jerusalem Temple after it had been desecrated and profaned by a pagan sacrifice (of a pig) offered by the Selucid King, Antiochus IV (Epiphanes). The festival would last for eight days, corresponding with the duration of Solomon's Temple dedication as found in 2 Chronicles 29:17. It included the relighting of the Temple lampstand, an element located in the Holy Place which was to be always kept burning because it symbolized the LORD's light in the world (Exodus 25:31-40; Lev 24:1-4; i.e. Jesus as being the light of the world (John 9:5)). After the initial Maccabean re-dedication, it was established (similarly to the establishment of the Jewish feast of Purim: a celebration of the rescue of the Jews by Queen Esther from the machinations of Haman; is a non-commanded religious tradition of the Jews) that a “festival of remembrance” would continue to be held every year celebrating this spiritual cleansing of the LORD's Temple, as a preparation for the LORD to return and dwell among His people once again. You will recall that when the Tabernacle was first erected, the presence of the LORD and the Glory of the LORD filled the sanctuary; and when Solomon's Temple was dedicated, again the Glory of the LORD (the *shekinah*) filled the Temple. But, during the Babylonian Exile (between Nebuchadnezzar's first and second deportation) Ezekiel experienced a vision of the LORD leaving the Temple, followed by another of His expected return. However, the Glory did not return either when the Temple was rebuilt, nor when the Maccabees rededicated it. Sadly, the ancient (politically inclined and savvy) Jewish historians did not record a miracle of one day's worth of oil lasting for eight-nights. Instead, the Chanukah story and tradition was compiled in the Babylonian Talmud much later (written ~500 CE but continued to be edited for another ~200 years⁵).

I, personally, do not know if the Chanukah miracle happened or not, but regardless, it has no effect upon my faith in Jesus Christ.

So what importance does the Feast of Dedication have in this passage? Why does John alone in the New Testament make this mention of it? Because, the true point and purpose of re-dedicating the Temple was so that the LORD might return and fill it with His presence, as He did when Solomon dedicated the first Temple and when the Israelites completed the Tabernacle in the wilderness; that the LORD would dwell among His people as Immanuel: God with Us.

Because here in this passage, describing Jesus in the Temple during the Feast of Dedication, Jesus clearly announces His unity with the Father, with the LORD, YHWH. Those who had the “ears to hear” heard Him and they knew that Immanuel had come to the Temple. In the Person of Jesus Christ, God the Son, the LORD returned to the reconsecrated and sanctified Temple to dwell among His people once again.

⁵<https://www.bl.uk/collection-items/babylonian-talmud#:~:text=The%20Jerusalem%20or%20Palestinian%20Talmud,all%20codes%20of%20rabbinic%20law.>