

G R A C E

Reformed Baptist Church

Soli ♦ Deo ♦ Gloria

THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

Sermon Notes

The Good Shepherd, part 3

John 11:24-44

November 27, 2005

Verse 30

- ❑ This Verse literally reads, “**I and the Father, we are one.**” The verb for “are” is plural in the original Greek.
- ❑ Secondly, the word for “**one**” is **NOT masculine in the original Greek...it is neuter.**
- ❑ Therefore, Jesus is NOT stating that the Father and the Son are the same person.
- ❑ James White, in his book *The Forgotten Trinity*, notes that, given the context of this Verse, the Father and the Son “are one in giving eternal life, they are one in protecting the sheep, they are one in the covenant of redemption”...they are one in **purpose**.
 - Notice also that Scripture refers to a husband and wife as “one flesh” (Genesis 2:24); however, they still remain two distinct persons. To describe them as “one flesh” connotes a special degree of closeness or intimacy. So, also, it is with the Father and the Son.
 - Also, in John 17:22, Jesus prays that His disciples “may be one as we are one.” Clearly, here, the Lord is referring to “one” in *unity* and *purpose*.

Verse 31

- ❑ Because of Jesus’ claim of equality or “oneness” with the Father, the Jews prepare to stone Him to death [in accordance with the Law].

Verse 32

- ❑ Notice what Jesus does NOT do: He does not flee from His opponents who are preparing to stone Him. In other words, in the face of imminent danger, Jesus remains committed to one thing: **fulfilling the will of His Father**. Christ knows that His opponents will be able to do nothing to Him, unless it is within the scope of the Father’s will.
- ❑ Jesus challenges His opponents to name the specific “work” that He performed which led them to pick up stones and attempt to kill Him.

Verse 33

- ❑ The Jews immediately state that the reason they are stoning Jesus is because He is guilty [in their eyes] of blasphemy.
- ❑ This is the first example in this Gospel of the Jews charging Jesus, explicitly, with the charge of blasphemy. Although it definitely appears that in John 8:59 [after Jesus states, “Before Abraham was born, I AM] the charge of blasphemy was clearly understood.
- ❑ In their explanation of their charge, the Jews actually acknowledge a profound truth:
 - Jesus is a man...in every sense of the word...He is *fully* man, for He had to be our perfect representative, our substitutional sacrifice, in order to save us from our sins.
- ❑ However, the fatal flaw in their argument was this: they believed that Jesus was a man who made Himself out to be God; whereas, in actuality, Jesus was fully God, and “emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men.”

Verses 34-36

- ❑ Jesus, then, responds to the accusations by the Jews by referring to Scripture.
- ❑ Notice what He does NOT do: He does not seek to defend Himself by attacking them, personally. Rather, He refers to the “final court of arbitration,” the very word Christ came to perfectly fulfill...the Scriptures.
- ❑ Jesus starts off by stating, “Has it not been written in your Law.”
 - Jesus is NOT distancing Himself from the Law, for He came to fulfill it. Rather, He is distancing Himself from the man-made “Law” of the Pharisees. Remember, the “Law” of the Pharisees contained the full word of God; however, they added a “hedge” to it. This practice was most definitely blasphemy in the eyes of God. So, what Jesus is stating is that the “Law” of the Pharisees contains [but is not solely made up of] the Law of God.
 - Although, technically, the Law was the Pentateuch (the first five books of the Old Testament), the term also applied to the entire Old Testament canon.
- ❑ Jesus, then, proceeds to quote Psalm 82:6:

“I said, ‘You are gods...’”

- ❑ To fully understand the argument that Jesus is making, it is necessary to read Psalm 82:6-7:

“I said, ‘You are gods,
And all of you are sons of the Most High.
Nevertheless you will die like men
And fall like any one of the princes.”

- ❑ There has been quite a bit of discussion concerning the identity of “gods” in this Psalm. There are, basically, three possibilities:
 1. **The “gods” are “angelic powers” who abused the authority God gave them over the nations.**
 - a. Some believe that the Septuagint, the Greek translation of the Hebrew Old Testament [translated in circa 250 B.C.] understood the original text this way.
 - b. Also, in places throughout the New Testament, especially Hebrews 1-2, Jesus is presented as far superior to the angels.
 2. **The phrase “gods” represents the entire nation of Israel at the time of the giving of the Law at Mount Sinai.**
 - a. The reason for this is because, historically, quite a few rabbis were known to have interpreted Psalm 82 as referring to the nation of Israel.
 - b. D.A. Carson, who adopts this view, states, “The curse that fell of the Israelites was then in consequence to the golden calf episode. The word of God pre-eminently came to Israel at Sinai (as virtually all Jewish leaders believed), but the subsequent rebellion, compounded by the failure to take the land at the first approach, led to the death of that entire generation. This interpretation is strengthened when it is remembered that Israel is also called God’s firstborn son (Exodus 4:21-22), generating a typology which Jesus has already claimed to have fulfilled.”
 3. **The “gods” are the corrupt judges in Israel who perfect the perfect justice of God throughout the land.**
 - a. First of all, quick reading of this Psalm seems to indicate that the Psalmist is referring to “the rulers,” those who are called by God to exercise justice in the land.
 READ ALL OF PSALM 82
 - b. Since justice is something that originates with God and His very nature, Psalm 82 refers to those called by God to exercise justice [in accordance with the nature of God] as “gods.”
- ❑ Most scholars adopt the second [“gods” = the nation of Israel at the time of the giving of the Law] or third [“god” = the corrupt judges] interpretation. [I adopt the third, although the conclusion is basically the same regardless if you adopt 2. or 3.]
- ❑ After quoting from Psalm 82, Jesus summarizes His argument in verses 35-36.
- ❑ What He is stating is simple, yet certainly profound. As one scholar [Leon Morris] put it [from Jesus’ perspective]:

“If in any sense the Psalm may apply this term [‘gods’] to men, then much more may it be applied to Him whom the Father sanctified and sent into the world.”
- ❑ John Calvin writes, “Scripture gives the name of ‘gods’ to those on whom God has conferred an honorable office. He whom God has separated, to be distinguished above all others, is far more worthy of this honorable title. Hence it follows, that they are malicious and false expounders of Scripture, who admit the first, but take offense at the second.”

- ❑ However, this is not all of Jesus' argument, for He states [in Verse 35], "and the Scripture cannot be broken."
- ❑ This is a powerful statement concerning the perfection of ALL of God's Word.
- ❑ Just like the Pharisees added to Scripture, it seems as though they also prioritized Scripture.
 - Do we ever *prioritize* Scripture today?
- ❑ What Jesus does is that He bases His argument on one word of a "minor," rather "obscure" Psalm of Asaph. What Jesus is asserting is this: ALL Scripture is "God-breathed," perfect, and consistent. The "minor" passages are just as perfect and God-born than the "major" ones.
- ❑ Jesus makes this point in the Gospel of Matthew, as well:

"For truly I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or stroke shall pass from the Law until all is accomplished."

 - The smallest letter in the Greek alphabet is the *iota* [*ι*]; however, what Jesus is probably referring to here [as Jesus likely was speaking in Aramaic, a dialect of Hebrew] was the smallest letter in the Hebrew alphabet, called the *yodh* [*י*].
 - The "stroke" is most likely a reference to "tiny projections" on some letters that help distinguish them from other letters [for example, notice the difference in Hebrew between the *he* *ה* and the *het* *ח*].
 - So, what Jesus is stating in Matthew 5:18 is, "Not the tiniest letter [i.e. the *yodh*], or even the tiniest part of a letter will pass from the Law..."
 - Again, ALL of Scripture is God-breathed [2 Timothy 3:16].
- ❑ Therefore, as Christians, we must embrace ALL of Scripture, not just the passages we like or are familiar with.
- ❑ Remember: It only takes ONE passage PROPERLY INTERPRETED to make a valid theological point.

Verses 37-38

- ❑ Once again, in the face of His opponents, Jesus appeals to the evidence of His works.
- ❑ Jesus, basically, states, "If you do not believe anything I say, look at what I do."
- ❑ Notice again, in Verse 37, Jesus refers to the Father, NOT as *the* Father, but rather, **my** Father, denoting a level of intimacy His opponents do not have [with the Father].
- ❑ So "confident" is Jesus in His role as the One sent by the Father, that He urges His opponents NOT to believe in Him IF He does not do the works of His Father.

- ❑ Jesus concludes these two verses with a profound statement: “if I do them...believe the works...so that you may know and understand that the Father is in Me, and I in the Father.”
- ❑ The phrase “know and understand” is made up of the same Greek word [γινωσκω] twice, but in two different tenses.
 - Therefore, most accurately, it means “that you may come to know [an instantaneous event] AND “keep on knowing” [a continuous event].
 - This is the calling of God for EVERY believer, that we may come to know the truth of the Father’s revelation in the Lord Jesus Christ [“the Father is in Me, and I in the Father] and CONTINUE to grow in that knowledge.
- ❑ Notice, the truth Jesus is revealing through His “works” is that “the Father is in Me, and I in the Father.”
 - Scholars often refer to this as the “mutual co-inherence” of the Father and the Son.
 - This mutual “indwelling” within the Godhead [Trinity], in some sense, is the basis of the mutual indwelling of Believers and Christ – for we are “in” Christ, while He is “in” us.
 - The point Jesus is clearly making is that He is in perfect harmony with the will of His Father.

Verse 39

- ❑ Once again, the truth of the words of Jesus were too much for His opponents to take, for “they were seeking again to seize Him, and He eluded their grasp.”
- ❑ The opponents of Jesus wished to capture Him because of His perceived blasphemy; yet, they were unable to do so because His “hour” had not yet come.
- ❑ Notice, once again, the sovereignty of God – Jesus was to be crucified in Jerusalem at exactly the same time the Passover lambs were being sacrificed.

Verses 40 – 42

- ❑ John then tells us that Jesus “went away again beyond the Jordan to the place where John was first baptizing.” This is likely rural Batanea, in the northeast.
- ❑ John also reminds the reader that “John performed no sign, yet everything John said about this man was true.”
 - Therefore, it is quite clear, once again, that John is revealing John the Baptist as far superior to Jesus Christ [who did perform many signs].
 - The statement, “yet everything John said about this man was true” is the last mention of John the Baptist in this Gospel.

- John concludes this chapter by the simple sentence, “Many believed in Him there.”