

## “Why Do You Seek to Stone Me?”

**Introduction:** (Read John 10:27-42) I’ve chosen to address this passage in more detail than I have in past studies in John because I am so convicted by Jesus’ interaction with the Jewish leaders when they respond to His claims to be one with the Father. It is not what I would have expected and certainly not how I might choose to respond myself. It can only be explained by who Jesus is and the clarity with which He viewed the work for which He was sent – His gospel mission.

In 1969 Francis Schaeffer wrote a book which he titled “Death in the City.” He got his title from pages like Romans 1, Jeremiah 9:21 and Lamentations 1:20. The book was reprinted in 2002 and I want to read from the back of the cover paragraphs 2-3. Listen to the opening paragraph of chapter 2. If Schaeffer were alive today he would be shocked at where we find ourselves but not surprised – and he would most certainly be disappointed with our posture as the church in our culture over these years. Jesus has something to teach us about ministry in a post-Christian culture which has turned anti-Christian by His interaction with the Jews in this text.

***The Outrageous And Hope Filled Claim Of Jesus*** – John 10:30 – **Note:** It is to this claim that the Jews react AND it is upon this claim that Jesus bases our hope/His promises. What was Jesus actually saying?

- This is a claim to deity. Think of the irony - ἀλλὰ περὶ βλασφημίας, καὶ ὅτι σὸ ἄνθρωπος ὧν ποιεῖς σεαυτὸν θεόν. (John 10:33 BNT)

D.A. Carson talked about the irony in that Jesus did not ***make Himself God***. Rather ***He is God***. He who ***is*** God actually ***became*** fully man (cf. 1:14)!!<sup>1</sup>

- This is a claim to oneness in heart and mind and purpose with His Father. The gospel mission for which He was sent from the heart of God and the fact that He stood before them as the God-Man, in order to accomplish that mission, declares a love, mercy, and grace, which is beyond words.

- It is the truth of who He is which gives depth and strength to the promise of hope He has just made (cf. John 10:27-29).

***The Jews React To Jesus’ Claim By Picking Up Stones to Kill Him*** – John 10:31-33; cf. also 5:18; 8:59; 19:7 – **Note:** In order to rightly gauge the Jews’ violent reaction to the Lord’s claim and the Lord’s response to their desire to stone Him we have to be reminded just who He is!

- The One standing before them is the Creator – the Sovereign over all that is – the Holy One holds their very existence in His hands. They recognized that He had just made that very claim (cf. 10:33).

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<sup>1</sup> Carson, “The Gospel According to John,” The Pillar New Testament Commentary, pg. 396

- Jesus' response to their violent reaction is to ask them a penetrating question before they can throw their stones. Notice the calm Jesus displays to their threat of violence – He doesn't flee or plead. ***There is a strength He displays – a strength which He eventually seeks to build in us*** (cf. John 15:18-25; 16:1-4, 31-33; 17:11-18). Jesus' strength came from His clarity of identity and mission. This sense of identity and mission are saturated with and compelled by His innate love.

1. He is Himself God – the Divine Son of the Father. His identity eternally as the Son is describes ***an essential*** relationship and is qualified ***by an essential*** love (define essential).

2. The relationship within the life of the Triune God is qualified by an essential, absolute and perfect love. It is this love which qualifies the relationship – Father for Son and Son for Father – which drives the mission of Jesus as the Savior. ***Jesus stood before those who would kill them in the strength of His love for the Father*** (cf. John 14:30-31).

3. The love expressed within God and also expressed in creation, is the very love exercised in redemption - human beings created in love to experience love from God and return love to God. ***Jesus stood before those who would kill Him in the strength of the Father's love for them*** (cf. John 17:20-26).

- Jesus asked them their reasoning for wanting to stone Him. He asked in such a way as to set the stage for the discussion to follow (cf. 10:32). Jesus' initial question is somewhat rhetorical making the assumption that the Jews response is unwarranted. Effectively, by His question, He is demonstrating that His assertion in 10:30 is true - ἀπεκρίθη αὐτοῖς ὁ Ἰησοῦς· ***πολλὰ ἔργα καλὰ ἔδειξα ὑμῖν ἐκ τοῦ πατρὸς· διὰ ποῖον αὐτῶν ἔργον ἐμὲ λιθάζετε;*** (John 10:32 BNT)

1. The works He has done are “good works” and they are the sign miracles.

2. The works that He has done are “from the Father” – cf. 5:16-18, **19-23**.

Jesus will eventually return to both of these points in His offer of grace to the Jews – 10:37-38, 39.

***Jesus Responds To The Threat Of The Jews*** – John 10:34-39 – **Note:** It is important to note that Jesus is not attempting to negotiate for His life (or reputation), nor is He trying to win an argument. Both of those are destructive motives.

- Jesus was not trying to save His life. How easy would it have been for Him to save His life (from a power perspective or from the perspective of compliance/compromise)? If Jesus were trying to “save” His life or talk His way out of death, He would've denied His love for the Father and His love for those He came to save - His mission would've been destroyed and we would be lost. ***He came to die for the sins of sinful man, at the hands of sinful man, in order to save sinful man***. Jesus tells His disciples that He came for the very purpose of giving His life (cf. John 12:23, 27-28). Moreover, He said to His disciples that the one who seeks to save His life will lose it (cf. John 12:23-26; also Matthew 16:24-26).

- Jesus was not trying to win an argument. He had nothing to prove to them, to us, or to our generation. Winning an argument was not His mission. ***On the level of truth*** – it doesn't matter if we believe Him!! ***He Himself is truth, irrespective of mankind's response!! He came to plead with souls in an expression of absolutely incomprehensible, love driven grace.***

- Jesus made an appeal to the unchanging and inerrant word of God to make His implicit offer of grace and mercy. The way the passage is worded the implication is that the “word of God” can never be negated at any time, by anyone and under any circumstances, (cf. 10:34-36).

- Jesus refers to the “Law” as their law and as the “word of God” that cannot be broken in order to return to His claim to be “one” with the Father AND to transition to a simple and gracious call to faith (cf. 10:34-38). He makes His appeal to Psalm 82 where the Psalmist castigates unjust judges – who were mere men referred to as “gods” because of the commission they were given, by God through Moses, to act as judges to administer the judgment which belongs to God alone (cf. Deuteronomy 1:15-17; cf. Exodus 7:1). These judges are mere men and they all die (cf. 82:6-7).<sup>2</sup>

Jesus then makes the powerful point in 10:36 that in light of Psalm 82:6-7 - How can you say to the One whom the Father has set apart as His very own and sent into the world on such a rescue mission – “You are blaspheming” because I said that I am God’s Son?” (ὄν ὁ πατήρ ἡγίασεν καὶ ἀπέστειλεν εἰς τὸν κόσμον ὑμεῖς λέγετε ὅτι βλασφημεῖς, ὅτι εἶπον· υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ εἰμι;). After all, Jesus is The Word incarnate (cf. John 1:14).

- Jesus now returns to His original question to makes His plea (10:37-38; cf. also v.32).

1. Do not believe ***me and my claims*** to be one with the Father and sent from the Father, unless I do as the Father does (cf. 10:37).

2. Even if I do what the Father does and you still do not believe ***me and my claims***, believe ***the miracles I do*** (my works).

3. It is then that ***you will know and understand*** that the Father is in me and I am in the Father (cf. 10:38). This precisely is what Jesus tells His disciples on the eve of the cross - 14:1-11. At that point Jesus is declaring that when you see Him in His ministry and His teaching you have “seen” the Father. The heart of God for us is on display in Jesus – this is an offer of life, relationship, hope.

His is our message to our families, our neighborhoods, our schools, our villages, towns, our cities. It is our message of life and hope to our culture. Like Jesus we speak it in our words and when the people to whom we speak don't believe us then we make our lives our message – the works of God in us and through us (cf. John 13:34-35; 17:20-24; 1 John 3:14; 4:12-17)!!

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<sup>2</sup> Raymond Brown, “The Gospel According to John: The Anchor Bible Commentary,” Vol 29, pg. 409

***Jesus Returns To Fertile Ground*** – John 10:40-42 – The passage doesn't end with the Jews responding to His offer of grace by again wanting to seize Him and kill Him. Jesus continues to call His sheep. The text finishes with Jesus crossing over the Jordan and returning to the place of John's baptism. We are told that many who had witnessed John's ministry now saw Jesus for who He is and believed in Him in that place.