

THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

JOHN 10.34-42



T. M. Moore

A Scriptorium Study

And beginning at Moses and all the Prophets,

He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself. Luke 24.27

The Fellowship of Ailbe

The Gospel of John: John 10.34-42
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Introduction to *John 10.34-42*

Just when it seemed Jesus' detractors could not get any angrier, Jesus indicted them for their sin by drawing on the Word of God.

There is much to learn about how we are to bear witness to the Lord from watching our Lord's own witness in the gospel of John. As we come to the end of John 10, we're getting a much clearer look at how the Lord testified of Himself, and of how we must, too.

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1 Tables Turned

Read and meditate on John 10.34.

Jesus' response to those who objected to His making Himself equal to God the Father presents a challenge to us. On the one hand, it is strictly Scriptural, and offers important insights to understanding God's relationship with Israel during the period of the Old Testament. On the other hand, it *might* seem to be evading the question. It's not; indeed, by choosing this approach, Jesus re-emphasized His claim to have been sent by the Father, and to be One with Him. Let's take our time working through these next few verses.

³⁴ *Again,*
He answered, "It is written in your law,
I said, "You are gods."""

- John 10.34

Reflect

1. We have been going quite slowly through the Gospel of John, I think you'll agree. Well, we need to slow down even a bit more, because the tack Jesus chose to follow here is revealing in many ways. Certain of the religious leaders who heard Jesus wanted to stone Him, because, as they claimed, He "blasphemed." That is, as they saw it, He had dragged God's Name down by suggesting God would become a man, or would be identified with men as Jesus was suggesting. Jesus simply pointed them to Psalm 82.6. The rulers – elders or judges – of the cities and towns of Israel were called "gods", not "God" (the word is the same, but the meanings are quite different, though obviously related). This title applied to leaders in two senses, each of which plays on the word *elohim* ("gods" and "God") in powerful ways. First, they *represented* God as His earthly magistrates, and they were to be men who knew God's Word and embodied God's character. Second, they were *entrusted with His Law*, to ensure that works of love for God and neighbor would be maintained in each community. To bring a case "to God" – or "to the gods" – was to bring it before the elders and judges of the community, as in Ruth 4. What does this suggest about how these judges were to be regarded? About the kind of men they were supposed to be? Complete this prayer: *Thank You, Lord, for giving Your churches elders and leaders who...*

2. Read Psalm 82. What's happening here? Have the "gods" lived up to God's expectations? How did God assess them? The people who were objecting to Jesus were the "gods" of Israel in His day. What was Jesus saying about *them* by citing this psalm? Can you see how Jesus was using the Word of God, which they accepted and believed, to back up His own words and to indict their unbelief? Explain. *Lord, I pray for the "gods" of our church, that they may understand their calling and do...*

3. By citing Psalm 82.6, Jesus, in effect, set His conversation with the "gods" of His day in the context of this psalm. Jesus was saying to these religious leaders, in effect, that God had associated Himself with *them*, and they were failing in their calling. According to Psalm 82.6-8, of what was Jesus warning them? Who was the "God" of verses 1 and 8, standing in the midst and judging these "gods"? *Lord, help us always to remember that we live our lives and do our work before You, so that...*

4. It's interesting to note that Jesus said the passage He cited was in the *Law* of God. But it was in Psalm 82, not the books of Moses, as we have seen. What does this suggest about the meaning of *Law* in the Old Testament? About the relationship of the Psalms and prophets to the Law? Would we be accurate in saying that the Law of God – the five books of Moses – is the acorn to the oak of Scripture? Explain. *Your Law weaves through every part of Scripture, Lord. Help me to understand Your Law, so that...*

5. Jesus, using Scripture, suddenly turned a conversation that had Him on the defensive and was becoming increasingly heated, into a street drama, the effect of which was to turn the tables on His interlocutors and to vindicate His claims. Do you see any parallels in Psalm 82 to the work of shepherding Jesus said He had come to do? How does citing this psalm reinforce all that Jesus had been saying about being the Good Shepherd of God's people, and not a "hireling" like you-know-who? Bring together into one the prayers you composed for questions 1-4.

Summary

"If the word of God came to people, that they might be called gods, how can the very Word of God, who is with God, be other than God? If by the word of God people become gods, if by participation they become gods, can he in whom they participate not be God? If lights that are lit are gods, is the light that enlightens not God? If through being warmed in a way by saving fire they are constituted gods, is he who gives them the warmth other than God? You approach the light and are enlightened and numbered among the children of God. If you withdraw from the light, you fall into obscurity and are counted as being in darkness; but that light does not approach because it never recedes from itself. If, then, the word of God makes you gods, how can the Word of God be other than God?" *Augustine (354-430 AD)*

Jesus demonstrates the power of Scripture in bearing witness. How do the Scriptures factor in your own witness for the Lord?

Closing Prayer

God stands in the congregation of the mighty;
He judges among the gods.
How long will you judge unjustly,
And show partiality to the wicked?
Selah
Defend the poor and fatherless;
Do justice to the afflicted and needy.
Deliver the poor and needy;
Free *them* from the hand of the wicked.
They do not know, nor do they understand;
They walk about in darkness;
All the foundations of the earth are unstable.
I said, "You *are* gods,
And all of you *are* children of the Most High.
But you shall die like men,
And fall like one of the princes."
Arise, O God, judge the earth;
For You shall inherit all nations.

Psalm 82

Psalm 82.1, 2, 8 (*Aurelia: The Church's One Foundation*)

God stands amid His people to judge their rulers all;
How long will they oppress those who on His favor call?
How long will they the wicked show partiality,
And treat with scorn the meek who their proper care should be?

Rise up, O God in splendor, according to Your worth!
Rise up in pow'r to judge all the nations of the earth!
Rise up, O God our Savior, and hear our fervent call,
For You possess and rule o'er the nations one and all.

2 If, Then

Read and meditate on John 10.35, 36.

Again, by using carefully-crafted questions, Jesus forced His detractors to look at the Word, to see how the Scriptures would answer their question about Him.

³⁵If God chose to call them gods, to whom the Word was given (and the Scriptures are unbreakable), ³⁶how can you say of Him the Father sanctified, and sent into the world, 'Now You have lied, and are blaspheming,' just because I said, 'I am the Son of God?'"

- John 10.34, 35

Reflect

1. Let's continue our slow walk through Jesus' response to His accusers, keeping in mind as we do, that these people have stones in hand to throw at Him, even as He talks. They were acting passionately and irrationally; Jesus, however, continued to regard them as thinking people. He expected them to be able to see the inconsistencies in their objections. He said – citing Psalm 82 – that God called the judges and elders of Israel “gods.” Why did He call them that? What in particular, as Jesus understood it, gave them such an exalted status? Complete this prayer: *You have given Your Word to church leaders, Lord, and I pray that they...*

2. OK, so the Word of God came to the judges of Israel, and “the Scripture cannot be broken.” That is, they could not receive that Word and make it say whatever they wanted it to say. Look again at Psalm 82. If those to whom the Word came failed to receive it as such, and to follow what it taught, what would happen? *Do You still judge Your people today, Lord? And are we, in our church, guilty in any way of...*

3. *If those entrusted with the Word tried to break that Word, by denying, altering, or failing to implement its teaching, the Word would not be broken, but they would.* Can you see how Jesus was gently but firmly warning His hearers? Can you see that, rather than calling them out and publicly embarrassing them, He was giving them an opportunity to reach a proper conclusion on their own? Explain. How does this counsel us in our witness to the Lord? *Lord, I don't want to embarrass anyone or put anyone down as I'm proclaiming the Good News. Instead, help me to...*

4. In the first part of verse 36, Jesus appears to have equated Himself with the Word (sent from God and sanctified or unbreakable) that came to the judges of ancient Israel. He had come to the judges (“gods”) of His day as surely as the Word of God came to the judges (“gods”) of Asaph's day (Asaph wrote Psalm 82). How did this strengthen Jesus' claims? Why did Jesus continue to link Himself with this passage? *You are the Word of God, Lord Jesus, whether in Old Testament or the New. Help me always to see You...*

5. Finally, at the end of verse 36, Jesus acknowledged that He was, in fact, claiming to be the Son of

God. He didn't make that claim Himself, but seems to have been agreeing with *their* conclusion based on His other claims and His works. *They* concluded that He was claiming to be the Son of God. He was affirming their conclusion. Emily Dickinson again: "Tell all the truth, but tell it slant/Success in circuit lies..." Why do you suppose Jesus took such a *circuitous* route to make this point? Was He trying to baffle and confuse, or to help those who were objecting to Him? Explain. Bring together into one prayer the prayers you wrote from questions 1-4.

Summary

"If the word of God came to people, that they might be called gods, how can the very Word of God, who is with God, be other than God? If by the word of God people become gods, if by participation they become gods, can he in whom they participate not be God? If lights that are lit are gods, is the light that enlightens not God? If through being warmed in a way by saving fire they are constituted gods, is he who gives them the warmth other than God? You approach the light and are enlightened and numbered among the children of God. If you withdraw from the light, you fall into obscurity and are counted as being in darkness; but that light does not approach because it never recedes from itself. If, then, the word of God makes you gods, how can the Word of God be other than God?" *Augustine (354-430 AD)*

"Think, people, think!" This is what Jesus seemed to be saying to those enraged people who only wanted to kill Him. He knew they wouldn't think, but He continued to force them into the Scripture, and to encourage them to tease out the implications of its teaching. He was letting the Scripture do the work of teaching and convicting the people, even though most of them were to hardened of heart to hear with understanding. Just because people *will* not or *can* not hear the Scripture, does this mean we should *avoid* Scripture in our witness to Jesus? Why or why not?

Closing Prayer

I waited patiently for the LORD;
And He inclined to me,
And heard my cry.
He also brought me up out of a horrible pit,
Out of the miry clay,
And set my feet upon a rock,
And established my steps.
He has put a new song in my mouth—
Praise to our God;
Many will see *it* and fear,
And will trust in the LORD.

Psalm 40.1-3

Psalm 40.1-5 (*Dix: For the Beauty of the Earth*)

I waited patiently for God; He inclined and heard my cry,
Lifted me up above the sod, set me on a Rock on high!
New songs in my mouth He gave; may He through me many save!

Blessed are all who trust in You, turning both from lies and pride.
Countless wonders, Lord, You do, and Your thoughts with us abide.

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Lord, Your worth who can declare? None with You can e'er compare..

3 Words and Deeds (Again)

Read and meditate on John 10.37, 38.

Once again, Jesus appealed to His works. He urged His detractors to consider the works He did, whether they were in line with the kind of works God would do, and that had been prophesied of the Messiah.

³⁷“But if instead
of doing what My Father wants, I do
some other works, not His, then surely you
must not believe Me; ³⁸if, however, I
My Father’s works do, though you still deny
Me, yet believe the works, that you may know
and that you may believe it to be so,
that God the Father is in Me, and I
in Him.”

- John 10.37, 38

Reflect

1. Jesus continued to point to His works, not simply because they were amazing, but because they were the very works prophesied of the Messiah in His coming. Look at Isaiah 61.1, 2. Jesus Himself cited this verse in His sermon in Nazareth, Luke 4.16-21. He expected these “gods” of Israel to know this passage, and undoubtedly they did. Why were they yet not convinced? Complete this prayer: *Lord, Your works are more, and more glorious, than any other, and You have called and sent me to...*
2. Meditate on John 10.37. If *we*, who are called to be witnesses to Jesus, do not do the works of the Father, do we have any right to expect others to believe in Him? Explain. What works in particular should we be seeking to do (Eph. 2.10; Matthew 5.17-19; 22.34-40)? *Teach me to do the works of the Father, the works of Your Law, O Lord. Today, show me...*
3. In verse 38, Jesus seemed almost to be saying, “Actions speak louder than words.” Explain. They may speak *louder*, but should we show people only our actions? *Today, Lord, let my actions be such as to...*
4. With Jesus, it was always words and deeds, words and deeds. The words explained the deeds, and the deeds validated the words. The combination of the works and words of the Father meant two things: First, those who saw and either ignored or denied them, refusing to believe in Jesus, would come under the same judgment as the “gods” of Israel (Ps. 82), as Jesus clearly implied in this exchange with the religious leaders of His day. Should we include a warning of judgment in our witness for Christ? What would that look like? *We don’t like thinking about judgment, Lord, but...*
5. Second, Jesus insisted that the Father was “in” Him, just as the Father will be in all those who speak His words and do His works. Jesus did not explain yet how that could be, but He would do so soon enough (see chapters 14-16). The fact that God comes to dwell in those who believe in Jesus makes the Christian faith unique among the religions of the world. Why? What are the implications

of this for us who believe? Bring together into one prayer the prayers you wrote for questions 1-4.

Summary

“The Son does not say, ‘The Father is in me, and I in him,’ in the sense in which we say it. For if our thinking is in line with him, then we are in God. And if we live the way he wants us to, then God is in us. Believers, by participating in his grace and being illuminated by him, are said to be in him and he in us. But this is not how it is with the only begotten Son. He is in the Father, and the Father is in him as one who is equal is in him whose equal he is. In short, we can sometimes say, ‘We are in God, and God is in us,’ but can we say I and God are one? You are in God because God contains you. God is in you because you have become the temple of God.... Recognize the prerogative of the Lord and the privilege of the servant. The prerogative of the Lord is equality with the Father; the privilege of the servant is fellowship with the Savior.” *Augustine (354-430 AD)*

If we are disciples and followers of Jesus, we will want our words and deeds to follow the pattern He established. How can we improve in each of these – words and deeds?

Closing Prayer

Keep back Your servant also from presumptuous *sins*;
Let them not have dominion over me.
Then I shall be blameless,
And I shall be innocent of great transgression.
Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart
Be acceptable in Your sight,
O LORD, my strength and my Redeemer.

Psalm 19.13, 14

Psalm 19.12-14 (*St. Christopher: Beneath the Cross of Jesus*)

Who, Lord, can know his errors? O keep sin far from me!
Let evil rule not in my soul that I may blameless be.
O let my thoughts, let all my words, before Your glorious sight
Be pleasing to You, gracious Lord, acceptable and right!

4 Not His Hour

Read and meditate on John 10.39.

Jesus' reasoned response to His detractors did not lead to their repenting and believing in Him. Quite the contrary. But they were no match for Jesus when it came to bringing in His hour.

*³⁹Therefore they sought again to try
and seize Him, but He went out from their hand.*

- John 10.39

Reflect

1. The English translation is a bit misleading here. I think it's important we try to establish a true sense of the action. The text says, "Again they began seeking to seize Him..." This could mean that right there in the street, in front of everyone, they lunged at Jesus, but He somehow ducked or dodged or disappeared, so that they came up empty. But that imperfect verb, *they began seeking*, suggests otherwise. They probably huddled together, or perhaps even withdrew to a less public place to consider their options. But why? What has made them so upset? What is the bone of contention with these "gods"? Complete the following prayer: *Jesus, Yours is the Name above all names, but this doesn't mean that...*

2. We can expect that some people in our Personal Mission Field will chafe at our insisting that Jesus is God, the Son of God, and the Messiah. They may not try to throw us in jail, but they will make it clear they find our beliefs untenable. How much of that is the result of our secular age, and how much is the desire to preserve their own autonomy? *Today, Lord, I pray for the people in my Personal Mission Field who do not know You. Give me an opportunity today to...*

3. The second part of our text reads, "and He went out, out of their hand." "He escaped" gives the wrong impression. "He went out" suggests that, as they withdrew to confer among themselves, Jesus merely went somewhere else, beyond the local jurisdiction ("hand") of these religious leaders (cf. vv. 40-42). John does not add that "His hour had not yet come," but that was certainly true. Explain. *You are Lord of time, Jesus, and Your timing is always...*

4. We might conclude that Jesus' attempt to reason with these people was a waste of time. They only ended up angrier and more determined to put Him away. What would you say in defense of Jesus' approach in verses 22-42? *My job as Your witness, Lord, is to...*

5. Jesus' mission was to witness to Himself as the Son of God and the Messiah of Israel. He carried out this calling by doing works that lined up with the teaching of Scripture, and by explaining those works and teaching people to see in Him the fulfillment of *all* the Scriptures (Jn. 5.39). He came and went according to His own purpose and plans, and He realized a variety of results from His efforts. How should Jesus' mission inform and guide yours? Bring together your prayers from questions 1-4 into one prayer.

Summary

"By the works he did in the body [he] showed himself to be not man but God the Word. But these

things are said about him because the actual body that ate, was born and suffered belonged to none other but the Lord. And he had become a man; it was proper for these things to be predicated of him as a man in order to show that he really had a body, and not just one in appearance. But just as from these things he was known to be bodily present, so from the works he did in the body he made himself known to be the Son of God.” *Athanasius (295-373 AD)*

Jesus did many good works, but He did not do them as ends in themselves. His good works were designed to draw attention to Himself, so that He could show people the way to the Father (Jn. 14.16). Meditate on 1 Corinthians 10.31. What does it mean to glorify God in our works? Should we expect our good works to provide opportunities for us to bear witness to Jesus? Explain.

Closing Prayer

I called on the LORD in distress;
The LORD answered me *and set me* in a broad place.
The LORD *is* on my side;
I will not fear.
What can man do to me?
The LORD is for me among those who help me;
Therefore I shall see *my desire* on those who hate me.
It is better to trust in the LORD
Than to put confidence in man.
It is better to trust in the LORD
Than to put confidence in princes.

Psalm 118.5-9

Psalm 118.1-9 (*St. George's Windsor: Come, Ye Thankful People, Come*)

Thank the Lord, His love endures! All to whom is love is sure,
All who fear Him day by day, let them thanks and praise now say!
Out of my distress I cry; He will hear me from on high.
He will free me from all fear. What can man do to me here?

For the Lord stands next to me; He will give me victory!
Over all who hate my life I will triumph through the strife!
In His grace I refuge find, in His steadfast love so kind.
Trust not princes, trust not men – Christ shall be our haven then!

5 Beyond the Jordan

Read and meditate on John 10.40.

This looks like a strategic withdrawal on the part of our Lord, since by crossing the Jordan He would probably have been removing Himself from the jurisdiction of those who were so animated against Him in Jerusalem. But there may have been other reasons as well.

⁴⁰ *And so He left and went away again beyond the Jordan where John baptized at the first, and stayed there.*

- John 10.40

Reflect

1. John mentions that Jesus removed Himself *beyond* the Jordan, that is, to the east side of the Jordan River. Here He would continue His ministry and await the next developments toward His hour. From what we know about Jesus' ministry, what was He probably doing during this time? Complete the following brief prayer: *Lord, as You faithfully worked Your Personal Mission Field, so help me to...*

2. There is enormous significance to the place where Jesus went – the place where He was baptized and began His ministry. We recall that Joshua assumed leadership of Israel as they camped on the east side of the Jordan River, where he diligently prepared the people by renewing their covenant with God in preparation for crossing the Jordan and beginning the conquest of Canaan. We also recall that *Joshua* is the Hebrew name which in the Greek becomes *Jesus*, and means “He saves.” What was Jesus saying to His disciples by returning to this place, on the east side of the Jordan? *Lord, all Scripture is about You. Help me as I read Your Word to...*

3. Jesus *stayed* in this place, just like Joshua and Israel camped on this east bank so many years before, waiting for God to direct their next movements. Jesus waited in the same way for the further approach of His hour. Evidently, doing the will of God involves more than just being *active*. A good bit of *waiting* should also factor into following the Lord's calling. Explain. *We wait on You in prayer, Lord, where, as we wait, we...*

4. Jesus was waiting for something very specific before He crossed the Jordan back into Judea to continue His ministry there. What was He waiting for (Jn. 11.1-17)? Keeping in mind the work of Joshua, so many years earlier, should we attach any significance to this event for which Jesus was waiting? Think this way: To a land dead in pagan worship and ways, Joshua brought *life* in God's covenant. Jesus *confronted* death *in* that same ancient land, and for the same purpose as Joshua. *I can only marvel at the mystery of Your Word and Your sovereignty, Lord! Thank You for...*

5. We can easily miss the larger significance of reports such as we read in verse 40. My take on this verse differs from that of Cyril (see on), but we're both trying not to miss the deeper meaning of what might seem a merely transitional or passing comment. These apparently insignificant texts are included for a reason, and very often that reason helps us to understand not only the situation which is recorded – Jesus crossed the Jordan to wait there – but the larger redemptive story as it appears throughout Scripture. Explain. Bring together your prayers from questions 1-4 into one prayer.

Summary

“Leaving Jerusalem, the Savior seeks a refuge in a place with springs of water so that he might signify obscurely, as in a type, how he would leave Judea and go over to the church of the Gentiles, which possesses the fountains of baptism and where many approach him crossing through the Jordan. This is signified by Christ taking up his abode ‘beyond’ the Jordan. Having crossed the Jordan by holy baptism, they are brought to God, for truly Christ went across from the synagogue of the Jews to the Gentiles and then ‘many came to him and believed’ the words that the saints spoke concerning Christ.” *Cyril of Alexandria (375-444 AD)*

What place does *waiting* have in your work in your Personal Mission Field?

Closing Prayer

When Israel went out of Egypt,
The house of Jacob from a people of strange language,
Judah became His sanctuary,
And Israel His dominion.
The sea saw *it* and fled;
Jordan turned back.
The mountains skipped like rams,
The little hills like lambs.
What ails you, O sea, that you fled?
O Jordan, *that* you turned back?
O mountains, *that* you skipped like rams?
O little hills, like lambs?
Tremble, O earth, at the presence of the Lord,
At the presence of the God of Jacob,
Who turned the rock *into* a pool of water,
The flint into a fountain of waters.

Psalm 114

Psalm 114 (*Duke Street: Jesus Shall Reign*)

When Israel out from Egypt went – they of God’s gracious covenant –
Out from a land of language strange, into their midst Jehovah came.

He His dominion o’er them set; at His command the dark sea fled.
Jordan subsided at His Word; mountains and hills obey our Lord.

What ails the sea that it should flee? Jordan, that it should withered be?
What makes the mountains skip like rams? What makes the hills spring up like lambs?

Tremble, O earth, the Lord is near! Jacob’s great God is present here!
He from the rock sweet water brings, making the flint flush flowing springs.

6 Evangelism and Salvation

Read and meditate on John 10.41, 42.

Not everyone who heard Jesus, and saw the many good works He performed, opposed and tried to silence Him. Many people listened and made the right conclusion, that John was right about Jesus, and Jesus' claims were true.

⁴¹Many came to that location, seeking Him and saying, "John performed no sign, but every word of John about this Man was true."⁴² And many there believed in Him.

- John 10.41, 42

Reflect

1. Retreating to the area beyond the Jordan had another benefit: It made it possible for those who were interested in hearing more, and perhaps believing, to come to Jesus apart from the scrutiny of their religious leaders. Are some people today reluctant to believe because they fear someone might disapprove of their doing so? Can talking with such people about Jesus in the presence of those whose opinion they fear put a damper on the conversation? Explain. Complete this prayer: *Lord, I pray for the unbelievers in my Personal Mission Field. Are any of them intimidated by what someone else might think? How can I help them to...*

2. The area beyond the Jordan was Gentile territory (recall Cyril's comment from yesterday), but close enough to Judea (familiar turf) that it would have been accessible to many. The religious leaders wouldn't have been caught dead there, but "many came to Him" beyond the Jordan. There they could safely hear Jesus and make up their minds without being intimidated by their leaders. How might local churches establish such "safe places" for interested people to come and learn about Jesus? *Lord, I pray for our church, that by all means we might...*

3. It's clear from these verses that some of the people who came to Jesus beyond the Jordan had been thinking about Him for a while. How can you tell that? What does that suggest about the process of becoming saved, and the work of evangelism that must address that process? Should evangelism be an *event* or a *process*? *Lord, give me patience with my unbelieving friends and associates, so that I will...*

4. The process by which "many believed in Him" began with John and continued for at least two years up to this moment. John, in some ways, prepared the soil of their souls, and sowed the first seeds. Jesus cultivated those sown seeds by His words and deeds, and continued sowing additional seeds as well. Now He was reaping some of the fruit of the process which began with John. Meditate on 1 Corinthians 3.5-9. What does this suggest for you regarding a strategy for reaching the lost people in your Personal Mission Field? *Lord, help me to develop a strategy for reaching lost people, and give me the grace to work it...*

5. The Greek of verse 42 says literally, "And many believed *into* Him there." Is there a difference in

believing *in* Jesus and believing *into* Him? Explain. Bring together into one your prayers from questions 1-4.

Summary

“When he has spoken anything great and sublime, he quickly retires, giving way to their anger so that the passion may abate and cease through his absence. And thus he acted at that time. But why does the Evangelist mention the place? That you may learn that he went there to remind them of the things that had been done there and said by John, and of his testimony. At least when they came there, they immediately remembered John. Therefore also they said, ‘John indeed did no miracle,’ since how did it follow that they should add this unless the place had brought the Baptist to their memory, and they had come to remember his testimony? And observe how they form incontrovertible syllogisms: ‘John indeed did no miracle,’ ‘but this man does,’ someone says and ‘so his superiority is shown. If therefore people believed in the one who did no miracles, how much more must they believe this man?’ Then, since it was John who bore the witness—in case his having done no miracle might seem to prove him unworthy of being a witness—they added, ‘Yet if he did no miracle, still everything he said about this man was true.’ And so, Christ is no longer proven to be trustworthy by means of John. Instead, John is shown to be trustworthy by what Christ had done.”

John Chrysostom (340-407 AD)

As Jesus was sent to the world to bring people to faith and the Kingdom, so He has sent us (Jn. 20.21). As He understood this work to be one of words and deeds, so must we. And as Jesus pursued the work of bringing the Good News as a process, and not an event, so He counsels us to do the same. How would you describe the state of your work of bringing Jesus to lost people?

Closing Prayer

I will extol You, my God, O King;
And I will bless Your name forever and ever.
Every day I will bless You,
And I will praise Your name forever and ever.
Great *is* the LORD, and greatly to be praised;
And His greatness *is* unsearchable.
One generation shall praise Your works to another,
And shall declare Your mighty acts.
I will meditate on the glorious splendor of Your majesty,
And on Your wondrous works.
Men shall speak of the might of Your awesome acts,
And I will declare Your greatness.
They shall utter the memory of Your great goodness,
And shall sing of Your righteousness.
The LORD *is* gracious and full of compassion,
Slow to anger and great in mercy.
The LORD *is* good to all,
And His tender mercies *are* over all His works.
All Your works shall praise You, O LORD,
And Your saints shall bless You.
They shall speak of the glory of Your kingdom,
And talk of Your power,

To make known to the sons of men His mighty acts,
And the glorious majesty of His kingdom.

Psalm 145.1-12

Psalm 145.1-12 (*Brother James' Air: The Lord's My Shepherd, I'll Not Want*)

I will extol You, God, my King, and ever praise Your Name!
I bless You, Lord, for everything each day, and e'er the same!
Great are You, Lord, my praise I bring; unsearchable Your fame!

To ev'ry generation we Your wondrous works shall tell.
The splendor of Your majesty we contemplate full well.
We speak of all Your mighty deeds and all Your greatness tell!

Then shall we all the glorious fame of Your great goodness sing –
Your righteousness, Your gracious Name, Your mercy: Praise we bring!
Your steadfast love remains the same, mercy our covering.

Your works shall thank You; all Your saints shall bless and praise You, Lord!
Your works You do so faithfully, according to Your Word.
The falling You uphold and the oppressed You rescue, Lord!

7 The Works and Word of the Father

Read and meditate on John 10.19-33.

Jesus had the works of the Father and the Word of the Father on His side. So do we.

³⁴Again,
He answered, "It is written in your law,
I said, "You are gods." ³⁵If God chose to call
them gods, to whom the Word was given (and
the Scriptures are unbreakable), ³⁶how can
you say of Him the Father sanctified,
and sent into the world, 'Now You have lied,
and are blaspheming,' just because I said,
'I am the Son of God'? ³⁷But if instead
of doing what My Father wants, I do
some other works, not His, then surely you
must not believe Me; ³⁸if, however, I
My Father's works do, though you still deny
Me, yet believe the works, that you may know
and that you may believe it to be so,
that God the Father is in Me, and I
in Him." ³⁹Therefore they sought again to try
and seize Him, but He went out from their hand.
⁴⁰And so He left and went away again
beyond the Jordan where John baptized at
the first, and stayed there. ⁴¹Many came to that
location, seeking Him and saying, "John
performed no sign, but every word of John
about this Man was true." ⁴²And many there
believed in Him.

- John 10.34-42

Reflect

1. Christians have been redeemed and saved unto good works. But ultimate, it's not our good works that we bear witness to, but the good works of the Lord Jesus. Meditate on Acts 10.34-42. How should the works of Jesus fit into your witness for the Lord? Complete this prayer: *Lord, I thank and praise You for Your many good works, especially...*

2. Jesus turned the Word of God in Psalm 82 on His detractors, because He wanted them to see themselves in that psalm. Why? Should the people to whom we bear witness be able to see themselves in the Bible? Should this be part of your witness for Christ? Explain. *You Word says all people are sinners, Lord. Your Word says unbelievers have chosen the Lie rather than You. Help me in my witness to...*

3. Jesus has said that the Word of God, empowered by the Spirit, testifies of Him and gives life (Jn.

5.39; Jn. 6.63). This suggests, following Jesus' own example, that the Bible should feature large in our witness for Christ. What are some passages you might use to help people understand the works Jesus has done? *Lord, I pray for my unsaved friends and colleagues, that today...*

4. We've seen that, while believing *into* Jesus is an *event*, evangelism – the work of making the Good News known – is typically a *process*. How can you see this in Jesus' witness? What are the implications of this for our witness? *Give me patience, Lord, and help me to keep working to...*

5. Review John 10.34-42. What are the most important lessons you take away from this passage? How can you begin to put those lessons to work in your life? Bring together into one prayer the prayers you composed for questions 1-4.

Summary

“The Jews thought that what he had said was ... hateful and blasphemous, for he had shown himself in these discourses to be God. Therefore they rushed at once to stoning and set to work passionately to hurl stones. He, however, strongly refuted his adversaries by the example and witness of the Scriptures.” *Novatian (fl. 235-258 AD)*

Are you prepared to use the Scriptures like Jesus did in your witness for Him? Explain.

Closing Prayer

O God, how long will the adversary reproach?
Will the enemy blaspheme Your name forever?
Why do You withdraw Your hand, even Your right hand?
Take it out of Your bosom and destroy them.
For God *is* my King from of old,
Working salvation in the midst of the earth.

Psalm 74.10-12

Psalm 74.10-14 (*Rockingham Old: O Lord Most High, with All My Heart*)

How long, O Lord, must they prevail, and mock and spurn Your holy Name?
Why stay Your hand? Deploy it now, and bring Your foes to lasting shame!

Our God is King from long ago, Who works deliv'rance in the land;
He split the sea, He crushed His foes; against Him none can ever stand.

The Gospel of John: John 10.34-42

Questions for reflection or discussion

1. Why is it important to follow the example of Jesus and use God's Word in our witness?
2. What are the works of Jesus, and how should they fit into our witness?
3. How can believers encourage one another to greater consistency in their witness for Christ?
4. How can we avoid giving in to fear when others take issue with our witness for Christ?
5. What's the most important lesson you've learned from John 10.33-42? How are you putting that lesson to work in your walk with and work for the Lord?

Items for prayer:

The Fellowship of Ailbe

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Thank you.