

Once Again The Jews Attempt to Stone Jesus

John 10:31-42

John 10:31-42 - *"Then the Jews took up stones again to stone Him.³² Jesus answered them, "Many good works I have shown you from My Father. For which of those works do you stone Me?"*

³³ *The Jews answered Him, saying, "For a good work we do not stone You, but for blasphemy, and because You, being a Man, make Yourself God."*

³⁴ *Jesus answered them, "Is it not written in your law, 'I said, "You are gods."³⁵ If He called them gods, to whom the word of God came (and the Scripture cannot be broken),³⁶ do you say of Him whom the Father sanctified and sent into the world, 'You are blaspheming,' because I said, 'I am the Son of God'?"³⁷ If I do not do the works of My Father, do not believe Me;³⁸ but if I do, though you do not believe Me, believe the works, that you may know and believe that the Father is in Me, and I in Him."³⁹ Therefore they sought again to seize Him, but He escaped out of their hand.*

⁴⁰ *And He went away again beyond the Jordan to the place where John was baptizing at first, and there He stayed.⁴¹ Then many came to Him and said, "John performed no sign, but all the things that John spoke about this Man were true."*

⁴² *And many believed in Him there."*

Background Notes

In John 10:31, once again the Jews took up stones to kill Jesus. Remember, they didn't pick up stones to throw at Christ because He had said, "Love your neighbor as yourself" or "Turn the other cheek" or "It's more blessed to give than to receive." No, they were going to stone Him because He claimed to be God! The Lord had said, *"I and My Father are one"*(v30), and by this statement He was making Himself equal to God. Verse 33 leaves no doubt that this is the reason why they picked up stones: *"The Jews answered Him, saying, "For a good work we do not stone You, but for blasphemy, and because You, being a Man, make Yourself God."* Then they took up stones once again to stone Him.

The first time the Jews had picked up stones to throw at Jesus was back in John 8:58-59: *"Jesus said to them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I AM."⁵⁹ Then they took up stones to throw at Him; but Jesus hid Himself and went out of the temple, going through the midst of them, and so passed by."* "I AM" is, of course, a title of deity. The Lord claimed it for Himself, so they picked up stones to stone Him to death, because according to the law anyone who claimed to be God was to be stoned to death. (Read about that in Leviticus 24.)

In verses 37 and 38 the Lord said that His works would back up to His claim to be God: *"Though you do not believe Me, believe the works, that you may know and believe that the Father is in Me, and I in Him."³⁹ Therefore they sought again to seize Him, but He escaped out of their hand."* In verse 32 Jesus called them "good works." In other words, the Lord was

saying to His opponents, “Look at the quality of my works! They are works of compassion, right in line with the Messianic predictions of the Scriptures!” But they wouldn’t believe.

In verses 34-36 the Lord used a fine point of the Law to temporarily defuse the hostility of the crowd. He quoted from Psalm 82:6: “*I said you are gods.*” Now if you go back to Psalm 82, you’ll see, in the context, that it was human judges who were called “gods.” The Lord proceeded to say that if these human judges were called gods in this Scripture, then certainly it was not blasphemy for Him to refer to Himself as the Son of God. Of course from our Lord’s perspective it was not blasphemy because He was the Son of God! So the Lord used this “technicality,” if you will, to temporarily defuse the hostility of the crowd. And then He escaped out of their hand (v40).

At the end of the chapter we read that Jesus left Jerusalem and went to stay beyond the Jordan, to the place where John had first been baptizing. This location would be on the east side of Jordan River, an area known as Perea. And verse 42 tells us that many believed in Him there! John the Baptist had prepared the spiritual ground well. These folks received Christ, and they believed in Him.

Doctrinal / Teaching Points

1. The Lord Jesus believed in the inerrancy of Scripture.

The “inerrancy of Scripture” means that there are no errors in the Bible. Because the Holy Spirit inspired every book of the Bible, and the Holy Spirit doesn’t make mistakes, there are not going to be any errors or mistakes in the Bible! Because the Bible is the Word of **God** it **can’t** contain errors. **God doesn’t lie!** So the Bible must be inerrant if it’s truly the **Word of God**.

Now where do we see that doctrine taught in this section of John 10? In His technical argument with the Jews, the Lord made this parenthetical statement in verse 35: “*The Scripture cannot be broken.*” In other words, the Lord was saying that when it comes to Scripture, you cannot pull the Scriptures apart and then pick and choose the parts that **you** want to believe is true. Why not? Because it **all** of it is true! The Scripture cannot be broken. Our Lord’s high view of Scripture included the doctrine of inerrancy. We dare not take a lower view of Scripture than our Lord took!

However, there are some Christians (maybe you know some) who have the audacity to say that there are some areas of error in the Bible -- that the Bible has mistakes in “non-moral” areas, such as history and science. Well, if you take that position, where do you draw the line? Who decides where to draw the line between what is true and what is not true? If you say that the Bible makes mistakes in history, before long you may begin to question the literal resurrection of Christ! Why? Because, after all, that was a historical event! If you say that the Bible makes mistakes in science, before long you may question the accuracy of the creation account in Genesis 1. The purpose of the Bible is not to teach history or science, but when the Bible **does** touch on those subjects, it **will not be in error!**

There's certainly a lot more that we could discuss about the fine points of the doctrine of inerrancy of Scripture, such as the place of figurative language, the intention of the author, the perspective of the author, the scribal transmission – etc. etc. But the main point here is that we should follow the model of Christ, because the Lord Jesus believed in the inerrancy of Scripture.

2. The Lord Jesus used common sense and avoided danger.

“Therefore they sought to seize Him, but He escaped out of their hand. He went away again beyond the Jordan to the place where John was baptizing at first, and there He stayed”(v39-40).

The Jews were out to kill Him, so Lord didn't stay around. He was well aware that the time had not yet come for His death. He used His common sense and left the area to avoid danger. This was not the only time that the Lord escaped from a dangerous situation. In John 8:59, Jesus hid Himself from the angry Jews, and then quietly walked out of the Temple area: *“Then they took up stones to throw at Him; but Jesus hid Himself and went out of the temple, going through the midst of them, and so passed by.”* We should do the same.

Now at some time in your life you may find that the Lord has allowed you to be in a dangerous situation for His sake – in fact, He may even call you to be a martyr for the sake of the gospel. But the point here is that **you** shouldn't try to get yourself killed! We should use our common sense, and avoid danger when we can.

An example of this point: some foreign missionaries have returned home from the country in which they were ministering because their Christian testimony and outreach had made that country too dangerous for their families. Returning home was not a wrong decision -- it was a sensible decision. Another example: At Emmaus Bible College, we don't send our female students to some areas of inner city of Chicago to do Christian service because they might become involved in a dangerous situation. Yes, we have a responsibility to reach the inner city of Chicago with the good news, but we also have a responsibility to avoid danger. Here again, we should follow the model of Christ. The Lord Jesus used common sense and avoided danger.

Practical Application

There is more than one biblical answer you can give to the religious critic.

When the Jews accused Jesus of claiming to be God, He could have answered them in a number of different ways. He could have gone to the Messianic predictions in the Old Testament and shown them that His lineage and His place of birth in Bethlehem – these certainly backed up His Messianic claims. But He didn't go that route. He chose to use a fine point of the law by quoting Psalm 82:6, *“I said you are gods.”* Who would have thought -- who would have expected that response from the Lord when they challenged His claim to deity? Would you have ever guessed the Lord

would have pulled something like that out of the Old Testament? No, I don't think so! But there is a lesson here for us: there is more than one biblical answer that you can give to the religious critic.

Suppose some overly zealous critic said to you, "You're not spiritual because you like loud Christian music with a beat. How can you be spiritual if you like that kind of loud music?" Now you could begin a discussion of the biblical definition of spirituality. On the other hand (with the right attitude), you could quote Psalm 150:5, which says, "*Praise Him with loud cymbals; Praise Him with clashing cymbals!*" By using this Scripture, you have put the ball in the critic's court. Possibly you have defused the critic's hostility, too. There is more than one biblical answer you can give the religious critic.

Let's take another example. Suppose an overly zealous critic said, "You're not spiritual here in this church because the women wear too much jewelry! How can you be spiritual if you have all that stuff on?" Well, once again, you could approach this question by beginning a discussion on the biblical definition of spirituality. On the other hand, you might quote (with the right attitude), Ezekiel 16:11-12: "*I adorned you with ornaments, put bracelets on your wrists, and a chain on your neck. ¹² And I put a jewel in your nose, earrings in your ears, and a beautiful crown on your head.*" That's a statement made by the Lord Himself! But the point I'm trying to make here is that there is more than one biblical answer you can give the religious critic.

Sometimes an overly zealous critic just needs to hear a quote from Scripture, rather than getting into a long discussion on the biblical definition of spirituality! Sometimes all it takes is a quote. Here the Lord defused the whole situation simply by saying, "What about Psalm 82:6 -- "*I said you are gods*"? You can just imagine those Pharisees rocking back from that comment - "Hmmm, I never thought about that one before!" Sometimes you, too, can defuse a hostile situation in this way.

The main point here is there is more than one biblical answer you can give the religious critic. However, when you use the technique demonstrated by the Lord in this passage, you must actually **be** spiritual -- not a rebel with actions or attitudes that need correction! You should also answer the critic with the right attitude -- not a sarcastic or defensive attitude. There is more than one biblical answer you can give the religious critic.