

## Ye are Gods ? John ch.10 v.35.

### MERELY A PROPHET ?

People who wish to denigrate the Lord Jesus, claiming that He was merely a man or at the most a Prophet, will quote some of His own words to try to prove their point. The statement cited in our title is a case in point.

### BLASPHEMY ?

Under the law of Moses the punishment for blasphemy was stoning to death. In this incident, zealous Jews in the crowd to whom Jesus was speaking, had picked up stones to stone Him to death because He had said:-

*"I and the Father are one."* (v.30).

The Lord Jesus often referred to God as His Father in a very personal way, so, as they put it, they were going to stone Him to death for blasphemy, because He, being a man, made Himself God (v.33).

### A PREDICAMENT ?

The Lord Jesus was apparently in a predicament. By referring to God as His Father He had implied that He was God's Son, thus making Himself equal with God. How was He going to respond to this situation.

He quoted from their own Holy Book:-

*"Is it not written in your law I said, Ye are Gods?"* (v.34)

Then He reasoned with them that if God called those people to whom He had sent His word "gods", how come they claimed that He was blaspheming, because He said that He was *"the Son of God"*, (v.36).

### THE LORD JESUS DENIGRATED

Present day enemies of the Lord Jesus claim He was implying that just as the people to whom God had said *"ye are Gods"* were only ordinary human beings, so He also was nothing more than an ordinary human being, despite having referred to God as His Father.

Even looked at from the most favourable point of view, if that is what Jesus was doing, it puts Him in a very bad light. Was it a ploy to get out of an awkward situation ?

### NO ANSWER ?

At first there seems to be no answer to this. When read superficially, this passage seems to suggest that in order to get out of a predicament that He Himself had precipitated, ( by referring to God as His Father and calling Himself *"Son of God"*), He was asserting that even according to the Jews' own Holy Book, His statements implied nothing more than that He was an ordinary man. On the other hand, if that was His ploy, why were they incensed even further ? *"They sought again to take him."* (v.39)

### WORDS TAKEN OUT OF CONTEXT

Words considered out of context are readily misunderstood. To appreciate the significance of why the Lord Jesus should quote the statement *"Ye are Gods"*, we need to know something of the passage they were taken from and to appreciate some of the background to the circumstances in which they were recited.

### THE SOURCE

These words are found in verse 6 of Psalm 82, written some 1,000 years before Jesus was born. Those to whom God had entrusted His word were expected to judge the nation of Israel according to God's standards (Ez.44.24). In Psalm 82, the prophet Asaph pronounces God's criticism and condemnation of the spiritual leaders of Israel of that time, for their injustice.

### THE ADMINISTRATORS WERE AS GODS

God had made them His administrators of justice. Being God's mouth pieces (cp Ex.4.16 & 7.1) they were as gods to the common people, responsible for carrying out justice as God required it to be carried out.

In the Authorised Version, the word "Gods" (ELOHIM) is translated "judges" in Exodus 22:6 and 22:9.

### THE ADMINISTRATORS WERE CORRUPT

Instead of saving the poor and needy from the clutches of the wicked, these so called judges were showing partiality to the wicked and contempt for the poor.

*"How long will ye judge unjustly, and accept the persons of the wicked ? Defend the poor and fatherless: do justice to the afflicted and needy. Deliver the poor and needy: rid them out of the hand of the wicked."* (vv.2,3).

Consequently the poor and needy were in a quandary, not understanding what was going on, and not knowing where to turn for help.

*"They ( i.e. the poor, the fatherless, and the needy ) know not, neither will they understand; they walk on in darkness: all the foundations of the earth are out of course."* (v. 5).

The foundation of stable society is just government. The authorities had gone right off the rails, morally and spiritually. The spiritual leaders had become self-interested, corrupt and arrogant. It was to such depraved leaders that God said:-

*"I said, Ye are Gods, and all of you sons of the Most High. Nevertheless ye shall die like men, and fall like one of the princes."* (v.35).

Thus reminding those corrupt judges that however high and mighty they thought they were, just as even princes die like ordinary men, they also would inevitably die and come to nothing.

### THE APPLICATION

To understand the impact that quoting the verse *"Ye are Gods"* had on prominent Jewish leaders in the crowd listening to Jesus, we need to appreciate that from early childhood, they were steeped in the Jew's

Holy Book. They would know most, if not all of the Psalms, by heart. Quoting one sentence from a Psalm would bring the whole Psalm to their mind.

These Jewish leaders, like the men of the prophet Asaph's time, were corrupt and unjust. They grovelled to the rich and powerful, and made life difficult for the poor, the needy, and widows. Several times the Lord Jesus had openly criticized them for this. So they would immediately understand what He was getting at, when He quoted that sentence from Psalm 82 :- "*Ye are Gods*".

#### GOD TO INTERVENE

The climax of the Psalm is in its last verse:-

*"Arise, O God, judge the earth: for thou shalt inherit all the nations."*

#### THE MESSIAH IS GOD INTERVENING !

The Jewish leaders would understand quite clearly that the Lord Jesus was in effect saying to them; "You likewise are wicked and unjust and I am the answer to this prophesy. I am God arising to judge the earth *The Father is in me and I in the Father* and my works prove it ! " No wonder they were incensed and still wanted to get at Him. They understood very well that He was not disclaiming His deity but rather He was asserting it. Let us read the remainder of the passage from John chapter 10 verses 36-39:-

*"Say ye of him, whom the Father sanctified and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest: because I said, I am the Son of God? If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not. But if I do them, though ye believe not me, believe the works: that ye may know and understand that the Father is in me, and I in the Father. They sought again to take him: and he went forth out of their hand."*

God had specially sent the Messiah, the Lord Jesus, into the world to bring about God's justice. How then, could corrupt religious leaders such as they were, dare accuse Him, of blasphemy ?

#### EXAMINE HIS WORKS

Please examine His works in order that you might know and understand that the Father is in Jesus and Jesus is in the Father. So that believing you might have eternal life (John 6.47).

His most outstanding works were; dying on the cross for your sins and rising from the dead.

#### PERPETUAL EVIDENCE

One perpetual historical evidence of this is the practice of baptism, from the beginning of Christianity till the present day. The immersion (baptism) into water and emergence from water portrays burial and resurrection. Those who believing in Him repent of their sins and are immersed in water (baptised), for their sins to be forgiven, thus depict the Lord Jesus' death, burial and resurrection, at the same time, burying their past sinful life, they rise from the water, to live a new faithful life.

( see Romans 6:3-4 and Colossians 2:12. Baptism is a Greek word meaning "Immersion").

#### ADDITIONAL READING:-

Ezekiel chapter 34, where the Messiah in the figure of David, is God's promised replacement for the corrupt religious administration.

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