

John – An In-Depth Study

[Part 13]

John 10:17-18 [NIV] *“The reason my Father loves me is that I lay down my life, only to take it up again. No-one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down and authority to take it up again. This command I received from my Father.”*

This short passage of scripture tells us much about Jesus Christ and His approach to His death on the cross.

It tells us that Jesus saw His whole life as an act of obedience to God His Father –

God the Father had given Jesus a task to carry out and Jesus would fulfil that task even if doing so meant a very pain-filled death.

Jesus was in a unique relationship with God the Father, that did not allow Jesus to do what He liked, only always what God the Father wanted of Him.

It tells us that Jesus always saw the cross and glory as one event –

Jesus never doubted that He would die, but equally that He would rise from the dead, a total confidence in God the Father.

The world is full of people who have missed their destiny because they would not pay the price.

No-one can take an easy way and still enter into any kind of glory or greatness. [**Matthew 7:13-14; Matthew 11:12; Matthew 6:33**]

It tells us that Jesus’ death was entirely voluntary –

Jesus stresses this fact again and again.

Told would-be defender to put away his sword. [**Matthew 26:50-52**]

Jesus could have called millions of angels to defend Him. [**Matthew 26:53-54**]

It was clear that Pilate was **not** condemning Jesus, but that He was accepting death. [**John 19:7-12**]

Jesus was **not** a victim of circumstances, He voluntarily laid down His life, because He chose to do so.

Jesus’ death and resurrection, as part of God’s plan for our salvation, were under God’s full control.

No-one could murder Jesus without His consent.

John 10:19-21 [NIV] *“At these words the Jews were again divided. Many of them said, ‘He is demon-possessed and raving mad. Why listen to him?’ But others said, ‘These are not the sayings of a man possessed by a demon. Can a demon open the eyes of the blind?’”*

All who listened to Jesus or now read His recorded claims are confronted with a dilemma.

Jesus’ claims are either the claims of insanity or the claims of divinity!!

1) The words of Jesus Christ – are to every generation of thinking men and women considered the only sane thing which brings sanity into a mad world.

Jesus is the one voice which speaks God's Wisdom in the midst of human delusions.

2) The deeds of Jesus Christ – healing the sick, feeding the hungry and comforting those sorrowing, were all selfless love for all humanity.

Not the acts of a selfish mad person that seeks only their own prestige and glory.

Some of the Jews even admitted no madman could open the eyes of a blind man.

3) The effect of Jesus on others is only good –

It is an undermining fact that millions of human lives have been changed for the better, by the power of Jesus Christ's words and example.

It is not madness which produces such changes, but perfect Godly Wisdom and perfect sanity.

John 10:22-28 [NIV] *“Then came the Feast of Dedication at Jerusalem. It was winter, and Jesus was in the temple area walking in Solomon's Colonnade. The Jews gathered round him, saying, ‘How long will you keep us in suspense? If you are the Christ, tell us plainly.’ Jesus answered, ‘I did tell you, but you do not believe. The miracles I do in my Father's name speak for me, but you do not believe because you are not my sheep. My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no-one can snatch them out of my hand.’”*

The Festival of Dedication commemorated the cleansing of the temple under Judas Maccabeus in 165BC, after Antiochus Epiphanes had defiled it by sacrificing pigs on the altar of burnt offerings to pagan gods. Antiochus also turned the temple chambers into brothels. This is also the present-day festival of lights called Hanukkah.

Solomon's Colonnade was a roofed walkway supported by stone columns, just inside the court of the Gentiles.

This colonnade was where people walked to pray and meditate, also where rabbis strolled as they talked with their students.

So this discussion took place at a time of national memory and thanksgiving, among the rabbis and their students.

Behind the request of the Jewish authorities was the expectation of an Anointed One, Messiah, to again cleanse their nation, this time from Roman pollution.

But others were setting a trap for Jesus to make a statement that would either bring a charge of blasphemy in their own courts or insurrection which the Roman governor would deal with.

Jesus had already clearly claimed to be the Son of God in public. Also, His deeds were those that were predicted by the prophets. [**Isaiah 35:5-6; Deuteronomy 18:15**]

The words and deeds of Jesus Christ were one continuous claim to Him being the Anointed One of God, the Messiah.

Although the majority of Jews and their leaders did **not** accept Jesus for who He was, some did, and to them Jesus offered and promised three things.

1) The promise of eternal life – This was theirs if they became members of His flock accepting Him as their shepherd and lord.

2) The promise of continual life – Physical death for them would not be an end but a beginning of continual life. They would never be obliterated or remain in the dark of ignorance.

3) The promise of security in life – Even in the darkest event in their lives they would be conscious of the everlasting arms about them, and the contentment and peace that would give to them.

John 10:29-30 [NIV] *“My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all; no-one can snatch them out of my Father’s hand. I and the Father are one.”*

What did Jesus mean by this supreme claim that He and the Father were One?

We find a simple answer to this in the prayer of Jesus Christ as recorded by the apostle John.

John 17:11 [NIV] *“I will remain in the world no longer, but they are still in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, protect them by the power of your name, the name you gave me, so that they may be one as we are one.”*

Jesus is telling us that the unity of one Christian to another was the same as the unity of Himself and the Father.

John 17:20-22 [NIV] *“My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me. I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one:”*

The end purpose of a Christian life is that Christians should be one even as He and the Father are one.

What is the unity that should exist between Christians?

John 13:34 [NIV] *“A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another.”*

Love is the unifying bond between Christians.

John 15:9-10 [NIV] *“As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love. If you obey my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have obeyed my Father’s commands and remain in his love.”*

This is the only test, proof and guarantee of love. [Also read **John 14:23-24; John 14:15; John 14:21**]

The essence of this relationship is that of love and obedience.

Christians are bound together by love and obedience to the words of Jesus Christ.

Jesus is one with God the Father because of His loving obedience to the words of the Father.

We are not in the world of philosophy, metaphysics and abstractions that few, if any, really understand.

We are in the world of relationships of the heart, the inner force that drives all our thoughts and actions.

John 10:31-39 [NIV] *“Again the Jews picked up stones to stone him, but Jesus said to them, ‘I have shown you many great miracles from the Father. For which of these do you stone me?’ ‘We are not stoning you for any of these,’ replied the Jews, ‘but for blasphemy, because you, a mere man, claim to be God.’ Jesus answered them, ‘Is it not written in your Law, “I have said you are gods”? If he called them ‘gods’, to whom the word of God came, and the Scripture cannot be broken, what about the one whom the Father set apart as his very own and sent into the world? Why then do you accuse me of blasphemy because I said, ‘I am God’s Son’? Do not believe me unless I do what my Father does. But if I do it, even though you do not believe me, believe the miracles, that you may know and*

understand that the Father is in me, and I in the Father.’ Again they tried to seize him, but he escaped their grasp.”

Jesus met the hostility of the Jewish leadership even with His track record of lovely things, healing sick, feeding hungry and comforting the sorrowing. This was **not** what upset the Jewish leaders.

Jesus claim to being equal to God was to them an act of a man invading a place which belonged only to God, blasphemy that by law deserved death by stoning. [**Leviticus 24:6**]

In a second line of defence Jesus quoted the scriptures which they were well aware of.

Psalms 82:6 [NIV] *“I said, ‘You are “gods”;* you are all sons of the Most High.’”

It was reminding judges that they were commissioned by God to bring God’s help and justice to God’s people.

This commission was based on the system of judges set up by God through Moses referred to in **Exodus 21:6; Exodus 22:9**. The Hebrew word translated judges is *“elohim”* meaning gods.

For an in-depth study of this subject please download our article ‘*Ancient Israel’s Legal System*’ under heading ‘*Judgement*’.

Jesus says that if often unjust rulers are called *“gods”* how much more reason for the Father’s special representative to be called Son of God?

By this argument how can He be charged with blasphemy!

This showed the fallacy of their charge.

“Scripture cannot be broken” by this principle the truth shown by **Psalms 82:6** was abiding validity.

Jesus then reinforced His claim by saying that He had been commissioned by God the Father for a special task.

If they didn’t understand what Jesus said at least they should accept what they saw with their own eyes, the miracles.

Such was the proof of Jesus’ commission from God the Father, with whom He had an intimate relationship.

A person’s words is something which you can argue about, but that person’s deeds are something that you cannot argue about.

Jesus was the perfect teacher who did **not** base His teaching on what He said but on what He was and what He did.

John 10:40-42 [NIV] *“Then Jesus went back across the Jordan to the place where John had been baptising in the early days. Here he stayed and many people came to him. They said, ‘Though John never performed a miraculous sign, all that John said about this man was true.’ And in that place many believed in Jesus.*

Jesus knew that the time of His earthly ministry was running out, so He sought quietness in the presence of God before His final struggle and painful death.

The place Jesus retired to was most significant.

Jesus went where John the Baptist had been accustomed to baptise and where He had been baptised and had His commission confirmed by God the Father.

The Jews who followed Jesus to this special place also remembered John the Baptist and his introduction to them of Jesus as the Lamb of God. [**John 1:29-35**]