

The Trinity Delusion

An exposé of the doctrine of the Trinity

John 10:33

"For a good work we do not stone you, but for blasphemy because you, a man being, do make yourself God."

The Trinitarian Claim

Trinitarians claim these Jews correctly understood that Jesus was claiming to be God Himself and this was their reason for charging him with blasphemy.

The Problems with the Claim

1. A Common and Very Unfortunate Trinitarian Myth

It is very regrettable that this particular problem even needs to be mentioned. John 10:33 refers to the accusation of blasphemy. It is commonly suggested by many Trinitarians that the Jews would not have accused Jesus for blasphemy unless he had identified himself as their God, the God of Israel. Many Trinitarians heavily rely upon this notion. However, this is nothing more than a widespread Trinitarian myth. They get this idea from their interpretations of John 8:58-59. They assume that Jesus had identified himself as God which would be blasphemy to the Jews and so they wanted to stone him. Many Trinitarians confuse themselves and suppose that if identifying yourself as God is blasphemy, then blasphemy is defined as identifying yourself as God. This is an obvious error.

Blasphemy was **ANY** word or act which could potentially defame or denigrate the name of Yahweh, the God of Israel.

Jesus declared that he drove out demons by the Spirit of God (Matthew 12:28) and he warned the Jews about blaspheming the Spirit (12:31-32) by attributing God's work to the devil (12:24). The

Jews committed blasphemy when Paul preached at Corinth (Acts 18:6). They weren't claiming to be God. Paul confessed that according to the Law, he was a blameless Pharisee (Php 3:5-6) who attempted to make Christians commit blasphemy (Acts 26:11). Shall we absurdly suppose that he was trying to get Christians to identify themselves as God? Paul confessed that he himself was a blasphemer due to his persecution of Christians. Had Paul been claiming he was God? Paul also said God's name was blasphemed simply by the sinful behavior of Jews (Romans 2:23-24). And were Hymenaeus and Alexander blaspheming by claiming to be God? (1 Timothy 1:20). The Scriptures make it quite clear what it takes to commit blasphemy and this particular Trinitarian claim is a completely baseless myth. Need anymore be said on this matter?

2. What Jesus said about these Jews

In the Gospel accounts, Jesus did not spare any words concerning the Pharisees. In the Gospel of John just two chapters earlier, Jesus had explained how these Jews could not understand him because they were children of the devil, and the words he spoke could not be heard by them because they were so blindly caught up in their own desires to do the will of their father Satan.

I speak the things which I have seen with my Father **and you then do the things which you heard from your father.**" They answered and said to him, "Abraham is our father." Jesus said to them, "If you are Abraham's children, do the works of Abraham. But as it is, **you are seeking to kill me**, a man who has told you the truth, which I heard from God; this Abraham did not do. **You are doing the works of your father.**" They said to him, "We were not born of fornication; we have one Father: God." Jesus said to them, "If God were your Father, you would love me, for I proceeded forth and came forth from God, for neither also have I have come from myself but He sent me. **Why do you not understand what I am saying? It is because you cannot hear my word. You are of your**

father the devil, and you want to do the desires of your father. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth because there is no truth in him. Whenever he speaks a lie, he speaks from out of himself, for he is a liar and the father of lies. But because I speak the truth, you do not believe me.... He who is of God hears the words of God; for this reason you do not hear them, because you are not of God." John 8:38-47

Now let us honestly appreciate what Jesus said here. He said these Jews were not able to comprehend what he was saying to them because they were children of the devil and wanted to do the desires of Satan. They couldn't understand Jesus because they were not of God. Therefore, it is a bit absurd to suggest these Jews are necessarily stating an accurate understanding of Jesus at John 10:33. They did the works of their father the devil and the devil is the father of lies. Not only do we find the Jews dazed and confused throughout the Gospel of John, Jesus said these men were liars and murderers who wanted to kill him. So why do Trinitarians regard the words of these evil men as if they were spoken by God Himself?

Jesus said these Jews could not understand what he was saying because they were evil men who were not of God. This fact alone presents a serious problem for the Trinitarian interpretation/translation of John 10:33 since their interpretation relies entirely on the premise that they did indeed understand Jesus and were accurately portraying who he was. Hence, we have Trinitarians claiming these Jews completely understood Jesus when Jesus declared they did not and could not understand what he was saying to them because they were of the devil and blinded by their desires to do their father's will.

3. A Conspicuous Translation Inconsistency

In the Greek text, the word *anthropos* ("man"), as well as the word *theos* ("God/god"), are without the definite article. The Greek text does not say, "you make yourself **THE** God" as we would normally see in the Greek New Testament when God is being identified. Because the definite

article does not modify the word "man," Trinitarians are happy to translate the Greek into English as, "you being A man." However, the article is also missing for the word *theos*. Yet they refuse to consistently translate the Greek text as, "make yourself A god." Put another way, Trinitarians render the words *su anthropos ōn* (no definite article) as "make yourself a man" but they will refuse to then consistently translate "*poieis seauton theon* (no definite article) in the exact same manner as "make yourself a god!" Why? There is only one answer: because it does not suit their apologetic agenda.

This passage most naturally reads, "you being a man make yourself a god." If an ancient Koine Greek speaker wanted to say, "make yourself a god," the Greek words used at John 10:33 are precisely how he would need to say it.

Note the following statements from scholars:

"Purely on the basis of the Greek text, therefore, it is possible to translate [John 10:33] '**a god,**' as NEB does, rather than to translate God, as TEV and several other translations do. One might argue on the basis of both the Greek and the context, that the Jews were accusing Jesus of claiming to be '**a god**' rather than 'God.' "- p. 344, United Bible Societies, 1980.

"'makest thyself **a god,**' not 'God' as in C.V. [King James Version or 'Common Version'], otherwise the definite article would not have been omitted, as it is here, and in the next two verses, -- 'gods .. gods,' where the title is applied to magistrates, and others" Young's Concise Critical Bible Commentary, p. 62.

This fact is also admitted by the well known Trinitarian NT scholar C. H. Dodd:

"making himself **a god.**"
- The Interpretation of
the Fourth Gospel, p.
205, Cambridge
University Press, 1995
reprint.

"We are not going to stone you for any good deed, but for your blasphemy. You, a mere man, claim to be **a god**." New English Bible (NEB).

Note to reader: The NEB translation was headed up by C.H. Dodd. It is not a non-Trinitarian translation.

It really is quite clear that there is no grammatical reason why this verse cannot be translated as "make yourself a god" rather than "make yourself God." The honest question then is to ask ourselves what is truly intended at John 10:33. The Scriptures faithfully provide the answer here in the immediate context.

4. The Context: Jesus showed us how he understood their accusation

The Greek word *theos* occasionally does not have the definite article when it does refer to the God of Israel. We cannot assume that the lack of the article means the one God is not in view. This is not relatively common but it does sometimes occur and it is not rare. It is also not uncommon for Trinitarians to use this as an excuse for their translation at John 10:33. However, honest folks are not looking for excuses to translate verses as they like. Truthful Christians want to know what is truly intended; they are not interested in what they can try and make it say to suit themselves for the sake of serving a creedal idol. The grammar allows us to translate "a god" but Trinitarians wish to insist otherwise justifying their translation by pointing to other verses where *theos* is used without the article. In such cases, it is the immediate context which will tell us how to translate *theos* when it does not have the article, not our personal desires. If we only seek to satisfy our own theological preferences despite what John intended to convey, we are simply not being honest people.

So, we must ask ourselves whether the context makes the intent of the language of John 10:33 clear to us. And it does. Jesus' response to this Jewish accusation makes the intent of their language crystal clear. Jesus answered them in a way which shows all of us quite decisively how he understood their words.

Observe the flow of this conversation. The Jews make a accusation of blasphemy and Jesus immediately responds to that particular accusation by quoting from the 82nd Psalm.

[The Jewish Accusation]: The Jews answered him, "It is not for a good work that we stone you but for blasphemy because you, being a man, make yourself ***a god.***"

[Jesus' Response to the Accusation]: Jesus answered them, "Is it not written in your Law, 'I said, 'you are ***gods***'?" If he called them ***gods*** to whom the word of God came, and Scripture cannot be broken, why do you say to him who the Father set apart and sent into the world, "You are blaspheming,' because I said, 'I am a son *of* God'?"

Honestly regard how Jesus understood the Jewish accusation. It should be clear to anyone that he heard them accuse him of making himself ***A*** god because he responds by pointing out the Scripture identifies other men "gods." Moreover, it is obvious that one of those "gods" is "***a god.***" Jesus Christ's response to the Jewish accusation demonstrates to us precisely how he understood their accusation. Therefore, we can know with confident conviction that Jesus understood the Jews to be accusing him of making himself a god.

Analysis of the Evidence

1. Jesus was a son of "the Most High"

He will be great and he will be called a ***son of the Most High.*** (Luke 1:32).

The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of ***the Most High*** will overshadow you and for that reason the holy child shall be called a ***son of God.*** (Luke 1:35).

Understanding that Jesus was a son of "the Most High" is very significant because Psalm 82:6 uses the same language.

2. Psalm 82:6 - gods, sons of the Most High

A careful examination of Psalm 82:6 makes the matter much clearer. The whole Psalm reads:

I said, "You are **gods**,
and **sons of the Most High**, all of
you.

This verse is commonly interpreted to refer to the human judges of Israel (note v.7). Notice the parallelism between "gods" and "sons of the Most High." The Psalmist is indicating here that these sons of God may also be called "gods" (*Elohim*). In fact, Yahweh Himself is calling these men "gods." This is because these judges are representatives of God Most High. They were to judge in the name of God, that is, as representatives of God.

At Exodus 21:6; 22:8-9 these judges were called "gods" (*elohim*). However, some translations obscure this fact by translating *elohim* as "judges" while others have translated the word as "God" which makes absolutely no sense in context. The main idea is that these judges represented God. So if an Israelite came before this human judge, *Elohim*, they were then appearing before God Himself not because these judges were God Himself but because these human authorities were God's representatives and as His representatives they were exercising His authority in His name. As such, these human judges were *Elohim*, that is, "gods."

God (*El*) takes His stands in the
assembly of the gods (*Elohim*); He
judges among the gods (*Elohim*).
Psalm 82:1

3. "To whom the word of God came."

These judges were called *Elohim* because they represented God Himself. Note what Jesus had said when he responded to the Jews, "to whom the word of God came." These human judges represented God Himself because they received the word of God and spoke on God's behalf.

Now let us regard Jesus. Did God the Father not send Jesus to represent Him? Did Jesus not say he came not to do his own will but the will of his

Father? Did Jesus not remind us many times that his words were not his own but the Father's who sent him? Yes he did say this many times in the Gospel of John. Did Jesus not say he came "in the name of my Father?" If then, those human judges could be called "gods" and "sons of the Most High" because the word of God came to them and they were representing God Himself, then why not Jesus who was sent by God? And that is precisely Jesus Christ's point when he responds to these Jews.

4. God set these human judges apart and God set Jesus apart

In singular form, Psalm 82:6 would read, "You are **a god, a son of the Most High.**" Carefully regard how Jesus responded to the Jews, "I said, 'You are **gods.**' If he called them '**gods**'.... do you say, 'You are blaspheming because I said, 'I am **a son of God?**'" Jesus is drawing the same parallel between being "a god" and "a son of the Most High," when he says, "if he called them "gods"... I am "a son of God." Jesus quite clearly had the parallelism of Psalm 82 in mind, "You are *gods*, and *sons of the Most High.*"

Now notice how the Jews accused Jesus with blasphemy and Jesus then responds to that accusation by asking why they accuse him with blasphemy for claiming to be the son of God when God Himself calls other men "gods." To paraphrase, Jesus essentially says, "Why are you accusing me with blasphemy for making myself a god? The Scriptures show us that God himself called these human judges "gods and sons of the Most High" because He set them apart for that purpose. The word of God came to them and that is why they are called gods and sons of the Most High. I was sent to speak the words of the Father. So what then do you say about me whom God set apart and sent into the world? Why do you charge me with blaspheming when I say, "I am a *son* of God when God Himself called them sons of God because the spoke the words of God just as I speak the words of God?" In other words, Jesus completely silences the Jewish objections because the Scriptures identified other human beings as gods and sons of the Most High because the word of God had come to those men and they represented God in that manner. It didn't make them "God" and it didn't make Jesus "God" either.

5. What the Jews finally understood Jesus to be Claiming

That the Jews never ever understood Jesus to be claiming to be God, and therefore their God, is also made abundantly clear in the following passage:

In the same way the chief priests also, along with the scribes and elders, were mocking Jesus and saying, "He saved others but he cannot save himself. He is the King of Israel; let him now come down from the cross, and we will believe in him. **He trusts in God then let God save him** if he delights in him, for he said, 'I am a son of God.'" (Matthew 27:41-43).

This is not something you would say to a man who believed he was God Himself. It wouldn't make any sense for these Jews to mock him in this manner if they thought he was claiming to be God Himself. Notice how the Jews clearly have no notion whatsoever that Jesus had claimed to be God. Observe how they do not mock him by saying, "Save yourself if you are God." If they thought Jesus had been claiming to be their God, it wouldn't make any sense for these Jews to have effectively said, "God trusts in God then let God save God."

At John 19:7 we see the final Jewish charge. The Jews charged him with making himself a son of God. Carefully regard the language they use and notice how similar it is to John 10:33. Also observe how the terminology parallels Psalm 82:6.

You being a man, make yourself a god. John 10:33

"He ought to die because he made himself a son of God." John 19:7

You are **gods**

and **sons of the Most High**. Psalm 82:6

The language they are using here, "made himself a son of God," is the very same language they use at John 10:33, "you make yourself a god." Let us once again regard the parallelism of Psalm 82:6

and the truth of this matter will be very clear. They heard Jesus refer to God over and over as his Father and in this way he was claiming to be a son of the Most High God. In this way, the Jews understood him to be making himself a son of the Most High, or put another way, making himself "a god."

I said, "You are **gods**,
and **sons of the Most High**, all of
you.

6. Jesus tells us what John 10:33 means

You can always count on Jesus. We can see clearly what the Jews really said by simply observing how Jesus understood what they said to him. Jesus explains it very clearly. In response to their accusation, Jewish quotes the Psalm, "I said, 'You are gods.'" Both Jesus and these Jewish leaders would have known the verse well and so they would have known the whole Psalm by heart, "I said, 'You are gods and sons of the Most High, all of you.'" Having quoted the Psalm, Jesus then makes his point. To paraphrase he says, "If these judges are called 'gods' and 'sons of the Most High' **because God set them apart and the word of God came to them**, what then do you say about me, a son of God whom He set apart and to whom the word of God came?" God was someone else who sent Jesus to speak His words in His name. So indeed, if those ancient human judges could be called "gods" because the word of God came to them, how can anyone honestly say it is blasphemy when the same is true of Jesus whom God sent to speak in his name? They had no answer. How could they accuse Jesus of blasphemy when the Scriptures themselves called other human beings "sons of the Most High" and "gods" because they represented God by speaking His words?

If he called them gods to whom the
word of God came. John 10:35

The word which you hear is not mine,
but the Father's who sent me. John
4:24

"I will put my words in his mouth."
Deuteronomy 18:18; see Acts 3:22-
26.

Conclusion

The facts tell us quite decisively what the truth of the matter is here at John 10:33. The Trinitarian claim is demonstrably false and the only basis for their translation, and their misguided claim, is their own personal theological agenda. This language is exactly how you would say, "make yourself a god," in the Greek language. The Jews eventually charged him with claiming to be a son of God. If we translated this passage as Trinitarians are wont to do, the entire exchange between Jesus and these Jews, and the associated facts, becomes a nonsensical and absurd mess of nonsense. If these monotheistic Jews had charged Jesus was making himself "God" then why would Jesus respond by demonstrating to them that human judges can be "gods?" How would that justify Jesus being calling himself "God"? It's ridiculous. But when we honestly regard all the grammatical and Scriptural facts, it is beyond doubt that the 82nd Psalm draws a parallel between these judges as gods and as sons of God Most High, that is, each of them being a god and a son of the Most High. If these human judges can be called "gods" to whom the word of God came, then it stands to reason that the very same thing can be said of the human being Jesus to whom the word of God came.

It is well beyond any reasonable doubt that Jesus understood the Jewish accusation to be, "you being a man, make yourself a god." Jesus made that undeniably clear to us by the way he answered their accusation.

I do nothing from myself but **as my Father teaches me I speak.** John 8:28.

The Father who sent me has himself given me commandment **what to say and what to speak.**
John 12:49

I have given them **the words which you gave me.**
John 17:8.

"If he called them gods **to whom the word of God came....**" John 10:35

Last Revision/Update: February 13, 2016

