

From v22 we learned—our Savior returned to Jerusalem—we know that His interaction with the poor blind beggar (in ch.9), was also in Jerusalem and at the temple, thus, seemingly, there's a few months between v21 and v22—it's now winter and our Savior returns to Jerusalem and to the temple, and again the Jews (the leaders), approach Him...

He clearly affirms His identity as God's beloved Son, co-equal in purpose and power, v30—"I and My Father are one"—that is, one is purpose and power (or essence)—the Jews disbelieve this statement, and attempt to stone Him, our Savior proves His identity as God's Son, by appealing to two things—OT Scripture, and His good works—in turn, as usual, there's a mixed response, some continue to disbelieve, and others believe in Him...

Thus, I desire to finish this tenth chapter this morning, under the two simple headings—The Passage Explained, and The Passage Applied...

I. The Passage Explained

II. The Passage Applied

I. The Passage Explained—in four considerations

1. [1] A question (vv31-32)—"Then the Jews took up stones again to stone Him. Jesus answered them, Many good works I have shown you from My Father. For which of those works do you stone Me..."
2. Everything our Savior did was a "good work"—every word and deed was "good"—He used the same word back in v11—"I am the good shepherd..."
3. If you remember the word means—"beautiful, excellent, or honorable"—the good shepherd can only do good works...
4. Matt.7:18—"A good tree cannot bear bad fruit"—and so, a GOOD Shepherd, can only bear GOOD works...
5. Thus, I think it's best to here understand "works" in the widest possible sense, to include everything He did or said...
6. A.W. Pink—"The word 'works' is to be understood here in its widest sense. The Lord appeals to the whole course of His public ministry—His perfect life, His gracious deeds in ministering to the needs of others, His wondrous words, wherein He spake as never man had spoken..."
7. Thus, our Savior's question is something like this—"What possibly have I done to deserve being stoned to death..."
8. John Brown—"The general force of our Lord's question seems to be this – 'I have never done anything to deserve such treatment. As a teacher, I have taught only truth; as a worker of miracles, I have done only good. I have taught no false doctrine; I have done no injurious act. If you consider me as deserving to be stoned, it must be for teaching some of these truths, or for doing some of these miracles. Which of them is it that has provoked your resentment, and led you to carryout so severe a punishment'..."
9. [2] An answer (v33), v33—"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..."
10. The Jews agreed He had done many good works—their problem wasn't with what He did, but with what He said...
11. Specifically, with what He said back in v30—"I and My Father are one"—that is, we are one in purpose and essence...
12. That this is how the Jews understood this statement is clear from v33—"You, being a Man, make Yourself God..."
13. For such blasphemy, the OT Scriptures were clear—such a person ought to be tried and if convicted stoned...
14. Lev.24:16—"And whoever blasphemes the name of the LORD shall surely be put to death. All the congregation shall certainly stone him, the stranger as well as him who is born in the land. When he blasphemes the name of the LORD, he shall be put to death..."

15. Notice, they failed to properly arraign Him, but basically, sought to kill Him as if they were an angry mob...
16. Matthew Poole—"By the law of God the false prophet was to be stoned; but he was first to be judicially tried and judged. This was but a disorderly action of an enraged multitude..."
17. [3] An appeal (vv34-38)—within vv34-38 our Savior appeals to two things—OT Scripture, and His good works...
18. [a] He appeals to OT Scripture, v34—"Jesus answered them, Is it not written in your law, I said, You are gods"—this is a quotation from Psalm 82...
19. Ps.82:6—"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..."
20. This Psalm is largely addressed to the OT rulers and judges of Israel, warning them to judge the people rightly...
21. Ps.82:1—"God stands in the congregation of the mighty; He judges among the gods"—that is, among the rulers...
22. The Hebrew word rendered "gods" is *elohim*—it basically means "mighty ones" and refers to the judges and rulers...
23. Throughout the OT, its a common name for God—here it's applied to men in a qualified sense as image bearers...
24. These rulers or judges, were "gods" of a sort to the people—it was their responsibility to rule among the people...
25. Now—in this case, the majority of them were wicked rulers, who judged the people unjustly and showed partiality...
26. V6—"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..."
27. [i] They were exalted—"You are gods, and all of your are children of the Most High"—they are image bearers of God...
28. They imitated God as rulers or judges among the people—they were given a very high and privileged position...
29. [ii] They were but men—"But you shall die like men, and fall like one of the princes"—this is a necessary qualification...
30. Though He calls them "gods" in some sense, let us be clear on this point—they are in fact MEN who will die...
31. Thus—our Savior appeals to this text and principle to justify calling or describing Himself as the Son of God...
32. It's very likely that our Savior is referring back to v30—"I and My Father are one"—we are of ONE essence...
33. The Jews obviously understood what our Savior meant—they knew He was claiming to be God's eternal Son...
34. They knew He was claiming to be God, to possess the divine essence, to be one with the Father in nature or being...
35. Verses 35-36—"If He called them gods, to whom the word of God came (and the Scripture cannot be broken), 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.."
36. Here's the simple point—if the OT Scripture describes judges as "gods," then it's even more proper to be applied to Me...
37. If the OT Scripture describes mere men as gods, then it's right for Me, who is one with the Father, to be called the Son of God...
38. Leon Morris—"If the word *god* could be used of people who were no more than judges, how much more could it be used of one with greater dignity, greater importance and significance than any mere judge, one 'whom the Father sanctified and sent into the world'? He is not placing himself on a level with men, but setting himself apart from them..."
39. J.C. Ryle—"It is an argument from a lesser to a greater. If princes, who are merely men, are called gods, He who was the eternal Son of the Father could surely not be justly chargeable with blasphemy for calling Himself the 'Son of God'..."

40. Notice, to further underscore the distinction between them and Himself, He describes Himself in a twofold way...
41. [i] As sanctified—"Him whom the Father sanctified"—the word *sanctify* literally means—to set apart for divine purposes..
42. The Father sanctified the Son, in that, He was set apart from eternity, to be the Redeemer of God's elect people...
43. Thus by "sanctified" is meant—that merely external setting apart of the Son, by the Father, from everlasting...
44. Necessarily included in this is, the approval and promise of the Father to assist and equip the Son in this world...
45. This sanctification, was an anointing of sorts, wherein the Father set apart His Son for the office of Mediator...
46. 1Pet.1:20—"He was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you..."
47. Here we find the same two things found in John 10:36—"He was ordained...but was manifest in these last times..."
48. [ii] As sent into the world—this refers to His incarnation—the Father sent His Son into the world in human flesh...
49. These two go together like this—the Father commissioned Him from eternity, and sent Him into the world in time...
50. Before leaving verses 34-36, let me say a few brief words on this phrase in v35—"and the Scripture cannot be broken..."
51. The phrase is really a side-thought (thus many English translations put it within parenthesis as an after-thought)...
52. Though it's a small phrase, it's one of the most instructive phrases within the NT on the infallibility of Scripture...
53. Our Savior understood, there are certain books called "scripture" that cannot be broken—that is, it's authority...
54. The Greek word rendered "broken" literally means "to loose or untie"—it here means—"to undo authority..."
55. The point being—according to our Savior, OT Scripture (and by inference NT Scripture), can NEVER fail...
56. Nothing can break it—not the opinions or unbelief of man—it's as sure as it's author, who can never err or deceive...
57. This is what our Savior appeals to—He appeals to OT Scripture, that can NEVER be put aside or rendered of none effect...
58. [b] He appeals to His good works, v37—"If I do not do the works of My Father, do not believe Me; 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..."
59. [i] The source of works—throughout this passage our Savior refers to "good works from His Father" (v32), and "the works of My Father" (V36)...
60. As I've said before, this refers to everything that He did, throughout His ministry, but especially to His miracles...
61. Our Savior repeatedly affirms that His miracles were done, by the assistance of His Father, to verify His person and words...
62. Acts 10:38—"God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power, who went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him..."
63. It's generally agreed, that the anointing here mentioned, refers to the Father's gift of the Spirit to Christ, at His baptism...
64. This of course must be understood in a qualified sense, for concerning His divine nature, He already had the Spirit (I and the Spirit are one)...
65. But—it's a reference to the Father's gift of the Spirit to the human nature of God, in full, or without measure...

66. Thus—God the Father, by the Spirit, enabled Christ to "go about doing good and healing those oppressed by the devil..."
67. [ii] The purpose of works—the purpose of these works, was to verify or prove His identity as God's only Son...
68. The Jews failed to believe that claim, thus our Savior uses His works as proof, to show that He was from God...
69. In other words—they should start with His works, and from His works, they should come to believe His words...
70. V38—"but if I do (the works of My Father), 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..."
71. The good works of our Savior, especially the signs and wonders, proved that He and His Father were one essence...
72. This is what is meant by the phrase "the Father is in Me, and I in Him"—it means the two are one in essence...
73. Thus, His works were intended as stepping stones for His words—they needed to believe what He said about Himself...
74. Our Savior isn't saying—they could believe the works, and disbelieve His words—no, the first validated the second...
75. [4] A response (vv39-42)—these verses describe a twofold response—some sought to seize Him, others believed Him...
76. [a] Some sought to seize Him, v39—"Therefore they sought again to seize Him, but He escaped out of their hand..."
77. [b] Some believed in Him, v40—"And He went away again beyond the Jordan...Then many came to Him...And many believed in Him there..."

II. The Passage Applied—in three observations

A. Christ is glorious and native man is notorious

1. This is illustrated throughout John's gospel—the patient, gracious Savior, contracted with fallen and depraved man...
2. And yet, here, perhaps as clearly as anywhere else, we have these two opposing parties brought into clear focus...
3. The glorious, gracious, loving, benevolent and gentle Savior, and, brutish, evil, hateful and murderous man...
4. Thus—what I want to do within this first application is, suggest we learn three wonderful truths about our Savior...
5. But in doing this, I want to provide an example on how you ought to read your Bible, and especially the gospels...
6. What would you have done, had you read through this passage in your own personal devotions or Bible reading...
7. Brethren, we can not merely read the Bible, but we must think about the Bible, we must ponder what we read...
8. Let me suggest when we read any portion of Scripture, we ask ourselves these questions—what does this passage tell me about God, Christ, salvation, duty, or eternity...
9. And thus, when we consider these passages in John, we must ask ourselves the question—What does it show me of Christ...
10. 2Cor.3:18—"But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, as bring transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord..."
11. Now, this of course does not mean that, all we do is read the Bible, behold Christ, and everything happens automatically...
12. No, we must strive, repent, put off, and mortify the deeds of the flesh, and we pursue and put on, and perform good deeds...

13. But—the point being—it's only by looking to Christ in Scripture, that we get the strength and motive for these things...
14. Thus, rather briefly let me suggest we behold at least three wonderful truths about Christ, within this passage...
15. [1] His humility—brethren, I think it's impossible to grasp the reality of what's before us—man, raising stones against God's Son...
16. Not only does this display the utter wickedness of man, but it also shows the almost shocking humility of Christ...
17. For remember—this is one who was sanctified by the Father from everlasting, and who came down from heaven...
18. Jn.10:36—"Him whom the Father sanctified and sent into the world"—He sent His own Son—"in the world..."
19. Yet, though He was "sent into the world" there is another sense in which—"He Himself came into this world..."
20. [2] His patience—here I refer to the fact, that our Savior continually and consistently bears with these Jews...
21. But—as we have seen again and again, He doesn't merely forbear with them, but He gives them the gospel...
22. Matt.5:38—"You have heard that it was said, An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth. But I tell you not to resist an evil person. But whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn the other to him also..."
23. Matt.5:43—"You have heard that it was said, You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy. But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you..."
24. Dear friends, our Savior didn't merely teach these things, but He Himself, personally and perfectly lived them...
25. [3] His power—by this I mean, it is His power that restrains them from carrying out the desire of their evil hearts...
26. V39—"Therefore they sought again to seize Him, but He escaped out of their hand"—He was in control of the situation...
27. These wicked men, lifted stones to kill Him, but they did not—why—but because His time for dying was not yet...
28. He will give Himself into their hands (in about 6 months), and then, through the Romans, they will crucify Him...

B. Most people are offended by words not works

1. By this I mean—the Jews were not so much offended at what He did—but they were offended at what He said...
2. As long as He remained a social activist, doing good deeds for the poor and needy, the Jews would endure Him...
3. But—when He taught the truth about Himself, them, and salvation—this was met with intense hostility and hatred...
4. The same remains true today—the world doesn't mind Christians clothing the naked and feeding the hungry...
5. The world will always accept a Mother Teresa, and even praise her—but they will never accept a John MacArthur...
6. We must remember, brethren, the world doesn't hate all forms of religion, but only the one which tells the TRUTH...

C. Good works validate and vindicate our words

1. Remember, how we defined our Savior's "good works"—all that He did, but primarily His signs and wonders...

2. His works, and especially His miracles, vindicated His words—what He did, pointed toward what He said...
3. Now—what I want to do in closing is, suggest that this principle is true in a broader sense of God, apostles, and Christians...
4. [1] The works and words of God—that is, God's works in creation, are intended to point us to His words in Scripture...
5. Let me put it this way—the works of God in creation, prove there is a God, and point to His word in Scripture...
6. Acts 14:3—"The fore they stayed there a long time, speaking boldly in the Lord, who was bearing witness to the word of His grace, granting signs and wonders to be done by their hands"
7. Acts 14:17—"Nevertheless He did not leave Himself without witness, in that He did good, gave us rain from heaven and fruitful seasons, filling our heart with good and gladness (Acts 24, 30)..."
8. [2] The works and words of Christ—again, as I have said, our Savior appealed to His works in verification of His words...
9. There is a sense in which, He was justified by His works—His works proved that He was sent to earth by God...
10. Lk.7:35—"But wisdom is justified by all her children"—according to the context, Wisdom refers to Christ...
11. In the preceding verse, the Pharisees were accusing Him of being—"a glutton and a winebibber, a friend of tax collectors and sinners..."
12. The reason being—He came to minister to sinners—this was very unlike the Pharisees who looked down on sinners...
13. Thus—they refused to believe He was from God—if He were truly from God, He wouldn't mingle with sinners...
14. He responds in v35—"But wisdom is justified by all her children"—that is, He Himself is justified by His converts...
15. The fact that He doesn't leave sinners as sinners, proves that He is from God—His works validate His words...
16. [3] The works and words of Christians—that is, our words also vindicate or validate the fact we are Christians...
17. Matt.12:37—"For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned"—the word "justified" means "to be declared righteous"...
18. What our Savior means is simply this—our words prove whether or not we are justified before God by faith...
19. Our Savior is merely saying the same thing that James teaches in chapter 2, where he says—"we are justified by our works (2:24)..."
20. Dear brethren, no person can ever be saved by our works, but these should validate what we say with our words...
21. There is a true sense in which, we are justified by our words or works, as these prove we are justified before God...
22. Let me put it this way—there are two courtrooms—there's the courtroom of heaven and of human opinion...
23. Nothing except the works of Christ can justify me in the courtroom of heaven—not any works (words) of my own...
24. But—my own works (words) prove that I am, by faith, declared righteous in God's court, for the sake of Christ...