

The DAILY JESUS NEWS #201

Jesus' Ministry in Jerusalem at the Feast of dedication

Another Failed Attempt to Stone Jesus for Blasphemy

John 10.31-39

31 Again his Jewish opponents took rocks in hand in order to stone him, 32 but Jesus said to them, *"I have shown you many good works from the Father. For which of these are you stoning me?"*

33 They answered: "We are not stoning you for any good work, but for blasphemy, because you, being a mere man, are making yourself out to be God."

34 Jesus answered them, *"Does it not stand written in your Law, 'I myself have said you are "gods"'?"*

35 "If he called them 'gods,' to whom the word of God came--and Scripture cannot be set aside-- 36 what about the one whom the Father dedicated 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'?"

37 "If I am not doing the works of my Father, do not believe me. 38 But since I am doing them, even though you do not believe me, I command you to believe the works, so that you may know and understand that the Father is in me, and I am in the Father."

39 Again they were trying to seize him, but he escaped out of their hands.

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NOTE: We use superscript identification of the source gospel in "blended texts" as follows: Matthew = ^{MT}, Mark = ^M, Luke = ^L, John = ^J, Acts = ^A. This "superscript ID" is inserted at the beginning of the quoted text, identifying that Bible book until a different superscript appears. In addition, *red italics identify the words of Jesus*. Old Testament quotations are CAPITALIZED.

CONTEXT DIGEST	
Location	Solomon's Colonnade in the Temple Complex, Jerusalem
Timeline	Feast of Dedication, Dec. 19 th (Month 35)
Jesus' Life Context	Stage VI: Jesus' Later Judean Ministry
	E. Jesus' Ministry in Jerusalem at the Feast of Dedication
Title	5. Another Failed Attempt to Stone Jesus for Blasphemy

COMMENT:

This Text concludes Stage VI of Jesus' life: The Later Judean Ministry. The Pharisees' intention to kill Jesus had been in place for close to two years now. This claim by Jesus ignited that intention with powerful feelings of rage and hatred toward him. While Jesus was able to slip away from them because it was not yet his appointed time to die, the Pharisees would now begin to act on the plans to arrest and kill him. They placed a bounty on his head, and determined that the next time he came to Jerusalem they would not fail to crucify him.

This failed attempt to stone Jesus was another key turning point for Jesus. He could no longer remain in Jerusalem, or Judea. So Jesus would next leave Jerusalem and cross the Jordan river to the East, to Perea (present day Jordan) in the last stage of his ministry before Passion Week.

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In this reading Jesus' claim to be God showed its force in the immediate reaction of the Pharisees to stone him for the sin of blasphemy. We see here that the title "**Son of God**" did not imply a subservient role for Jesus in his relationship to the Father, it meant just the opposite: equality with him.

There is no question that both Jesus, and his enemies clearly understood that he believed himself to be YHWH in human flesh. Furthermore, Jesus commanded everyone to believe that he was God, in the same way that he did.

We saw in yesterday's reading that Jesus promised that because he was God, no one had the power to remove a person that has believed in him from his eternal salvation. "**No one can snatch them out of my hands.**" John used his trademark irony in today's text to contrast the weakness of sinful human hands with Jesus' omnipotent hands.

The Jewish leaders picked up rocks in their hands to stone Jesus, but were not able to cast those stones out of their hands toward Jesus. They were left holding what they did not want to have. However, their hands could not hold Jesus in order to stone him--John said that he "*escaped out of their hands.*" Thus, their hands were twice useless against the hands of Jesus.

John's point: Jesus' hands are omnipotent, and powerful to save. The hands of those who wanted to kill him were weak and useless against him.

Jesus probably used the background of the Feast of Dedication when he called himself "***the one that the Father dedicated and sent into the world...***" Jesus was claiming to BE the Temple of God here, a claim he had first made at the beginning of his ministry: "***Destroy this Temple and I will raise it up again in three days.***" (JN 2.19)

His Father was living in him as the Temple, and Jesus was constantly living in the invisible Presence, or Temple of His Father as well. Through this abiding union, they were truly ONE.

APPLICATION:

The peace and calm of Jesus in the face of an attempted assassination by a small mob is inspiring. Jesus was more conscious of the presence of His Father with him than the threats of weak-handed men. THIS good shepherd is truly able to hold us securely in his nail-scarred hands...come what may.

How can you draw your strength and courage from the certainty that Jesus is with you every moment--you in him, and he in you by his Spirit-- and that he has a firm, reliable grip on you that will never let you go? Especially when you face discouragement, danger, or difficulty?