

John 8:58,59; 10:30-33 - The Real Reason the Jews Sought to Kill Jesus -r

John 10:33 - The Jews answered him, "We don't stone you for a good work, but for blasphemy: because you, being a man, make yourself God."

Jesus, had asked them, "I have shown you many good works from my Father." Then he asked them, "For which of those works do you stone me?" (John 10:32) This question was not merely rhetorical; Jesus was indeed pointing out the true reason that these Jews wanted to kill him, that is, because he did the works of his God and Father, Jehovah, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. The lying, deceptive, Jewish leaders denied that they sought to kill Jesus because his good works from his God and Father, but they claimed that they wished to kill Jesus because, he being a sinful man, would make himself out to be God, or a god. I believe that Jesus, in his question as related in John 10:32, gave the real reason they sought to kill Jesus, and which the Jewish leaders denied in verse 33. Either the Jews were lying in John 10:33, or else Jesus presented a question that had no truth in it in verse 32.

A similar incident had occurred earlier. We read in John 7:1: "After these things, Jesus walked in Galilee, for he would not walk in Judea, because there were Jews who sought to kill him." However, in John 7:19,20, we read:

Didn't Moses give you the law, and yet none of you keeps the law? Why do you seek to kill me? The multitude answered, "You have a demon! Who seeks to kill you?"

Thereby the Jews were, in effect, declaring two lies: (1) that Jesus had a demon, and (2) that no one was seeking to kill Jesus, or else Jesus was asking a question that had no truth in it.

Nevertheless, in John 7:25, we read:

Some therefore of them of Jerusalem said, "Isn't this he whom they seek to kill? Behold, he speaks openly, and they say nothing to him. Can it be that the rulers indeed know that this is truly the Christ?"

Then, again, as recorded in John 8:59, the Jews again sought to kill Jesus. Many like to point to John 8:58,59, and claim that the reason they wanted to kill Jesus was that he stated that he was the I AM of Exodus 3:14,15, or that he was claiming to Jehovah of Isaiah 41:4; 43:10, etc. Having discussed John 8:58 in [several other studies](#), we will not discuss that verse here, except to the note the connections many read into what Jesus stated.

The idea to kill Jesus, however, did not spring suddenly; it was not a new issue in the record stated in John 10:33, nor even as recorded in John 7:1 or when they attempted to kill Jesus as recorded in John 8:59; it was an idea that had been in the minds of the Jewish leaders for some time. The idea of charging Jesus with being God (or, a god), or equal to God (or, a god), developed over time, as a result of the desire to kill Jesus, not the other way around. The Jews knew that they could not present a case as "that since he healed people, that he should be killed"; so they watched and waited for an occasion for which they could accuse him publicly. The Jewish leaders knew that they had to have a good reason -- in the eyes of the people -- to justify the killing of Jesus. (Matthew 21:46) They wanted to kill Jesus, just as they wanted to kill John the Baptist. (Matthew 14:5) They had much earlier realized that the work of Jesus was showing them up as being deficient as leaders. Thus, they began to test Jesus, seeking to find something that could be used to publicly accuse him.

The first recorded attempt on his life by any of the Jews was in his hometown of Nazareth. He had already performed many works from God in Capernaum, and evidently the people of Nazareth knew of those works. However, when Jesus read Isaiah 61:1, and, in effect, proclaimed that he was the one spoken of in that prophecy, the Jews became angry, and tried to throw him off a cliff. There is nothing at all in the record that hints that Jesus here proclaimed himself to "God," nor is there any hint that he claimed to be Jehovah. Rather than claiming to be Jehovah, he was claiming that he was the one spoken of as anointed by Jehovah -- "Jehovah has anointed me." (Isaiah 16:1, World English) Yet, this is all that was needed to get the people angry enough to want to kill Jesus. They evidently knew from the prophecy that Jesus had read that Jesus was claiming to be the promised Messiah, the Anointed One of Jehovah. However, they had known Jesus before, and couldn't accept him as promised prophet, for Jesus says: "Most assuredly I tell you, no prophet is acceptable in his hometown." (Luke 4:24) Their familiarity with Jesus as the humble carpenter's son led them to believe that Jesus was not what they expected the messiah to be. (Luke 4:14-28) However, there is nothing in the record that indicates that they tried to kill Jesus because Jesus allegedly claimed to be God.

In Matthew 5:20, Jesus pointed to the lack of righteousness amongst the scribes and Pharisees. Then after performing several miracles in the name of his God and Father, he told of how the sons of kingdom were to be thrown into outer darkness. (Matthew 8:1-12) There is no doubt that the Jewish leaders began to take note of his activities. Additionally, the lying and deceptive nature of these leaders are recorded for us.

Thus, the scribes falsely claim he committed blasphemy, as recorded in Matthew 9:1-8; Mark 2:3-12; and Luke 5:12-16, by falsely claiming that no one but God could forgive sins. Jesus responded that he, as the promised son of the man (David), had been given authority to forgive sins. Jesus did not claim that he was the source of his own authority, but freely proclaimed that the authority had been given to him.

Then the Pharisees, in effect, falsely accused him, by asking "Why does your teacher eat with the tax collectors and the sinners?" (Matthew 9:11; Mark 2:16; Luke 5:30) And thus, it becomes apparent that these leaders had already begun seeking something to legally accuse Jesus of before the people.

Jesus healed two blind men, and later he cast out a demon from a mute man. (Matthew 9:27-32) Were Jewish leaders joyful that the works of God were being performed by this man from Galilee? Absolutely not! Instead, they were greatly angered. Thus, the Pharisees said: "By the prince of demons, he cast out demons."

In Matthew 11:19, Jesus reports the evil that was being said of him, when Jesus said: "The son of the man (David) came eating and drinking, and they say, 'Behold, a gluttonous man, and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!'" Yes, the Jews were very experienced in bringing forth false accusations against Jesus, and twisting matters to make them appear something that they were not.

The Jewish leaders got their chance to bring up another false charge when the disciples of Jesus plucked grains from a field, rubbed them with their hands, in order to satisfy their hunger. The accusation of the Jewish leaders was, "your disciples do what is not lawful to do on the Sabbath." (Matthew 12:1,2; Mark 2:23,25; Luke 6:1,2) Notice the word "lawful." Jesus uses that word several times. It was indeed forbidden under the Law to work on the sabbath. The law states: "You shall not do any work in it, you, nor your son, nor your daughter, your man-servant, nor your maid-servant, nor your cattle, nor your stranger who is within your gates." (Exodus 20:10) Does this, however, mean to do absolutely no work at all? Certainly not! One has to do some work just get up; to eat; to take care of his being alive. Even the very act of breathing could be considered "work." However, the word is used in the sense of the work usually done on a normal working day. Would the plucking, crushing, and eating of grain from a field fall under the category of a such normal work? We should note that the Law forbids taking a sickle to a neighbor's grain as is normally done, what Jesus' disciples were doing was permitted as an exception to the general rule of the Law. (Deuteronomy 23:25) Jesus, thus, points to exceptions are made to what would normally not be "lawful." While on the one hand, it would be not lawful to do such plucking and reaping, on the other hand, as Jesus says, there are some circumstances where there are exceptions to what is "not lawful," and therefore, what would normally not be lawful would become lawful. Thus, later, Jesus said, "it is lawful to do good [rightly] on the Sabbath day." -- Matthew 12:12.

The intent of the Law regarding the Sabbath was for man's good, not for man to starve himself so that he might keep the law. Jesus was saying that it was "lawful," under the circumstances for David and those who were with him, to eat of the showbread, which would normally be "not lawful." Likewise, what Jesus' disciples were doing was a necessity just as it was with David, and thus would be an exceptional case to what was "not lawful." As Jesus stated: "The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath" (Mark 2:27); and "The son of the man* is also lord of the sabbath." -- Mark 2:28.

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*The Greek has the definite article before man, referring to Jesus' being the son of a specific man, that is, the son of David. The issue was raised again when Jesus healed on the sabbath. Mark 3 reports of Jesus' healing of the man with a withered hand, which miracle was done on the sabbath. Thus, in their search for a reason to kill Jesus, rather than thinking about praising God if Jesus did a good from God, we read: "They watched him, whether he would heal him on the Sabbath day, that they might accuse him." (Mark 3:2) This definitely shows that they were already seeking some reason to accuse Jesus. Thus Mark 3:6 says: "The Pharisees went out, and immediately took counsel with the Herodians against him, how they might destroy him." Here they thought they might have a clear legal "cause" for which to kill Jesus. It does show that they were already seeking a way to destroy Jesus *before* they came up the false charge that Jesus was claiming to be God [or, a god], or equal to God [or, a god]. Thus, their seeking to kill Jesus after falsely claiming that Jesus was claimed to "God" [or, a god] is not the real reason they were seeking to kill Jesus (John 10:33), but rather the false accusation that was being used as an excuse to do what they had already determined to do. Jesus had already pointed to the real reason they sought to kill Jesus, that is, because Jesus performed the works of his God and Father. -- John 10:32.

John 5:16 thus relates: "For this cause the Jews persecuted Jesus, and sought to kill him, because he did these things on the Sabbath." Considered all the earlier accusations against Jesus, and their further seeking a reason to accuse Jesus, we have no doubt that they had already determined beforehand to kill Jesus., Thus, John here relates the legal "cause" that they were setting forth, the legal excuse, so to speak, that they were setting forth to justify their seeking to kill Jesus.

Then Jesus says: "My Father (who is also his God -- Matthew 27:46; 15:34; 20:17; John 17:1,3; Romans 15:6; 2 Corinthians 11:31; Ephesians 1:3; 1 Peter 1:3; Revelation 3:12) is still working, so I am working, too." (John 5:17) The Jews recognized that Jesus was speaking about God, and proclaiming God to be his Father, and himself as God's son, which, they claimed, was tantamount to a sinner man making himself out to either be equal to God, or equal to the godship (of the angels). Thus, John relates in John 5:18: "For this cause therefore the Jews sought the more to kill him, because he not only broke the Sabbath, but also called God his own Father, making himself equal with God [TW THEW]."

The Greek "tw thew," "THE GOD," could be referring collectively to the angels as "the mighty," as in Psalm 8:5, and in a similar manner that Psalm 82:1 uses the Hebrew collectively of the "children of the Most High" spoken of in Psalm 82:6. A similar usage may also be found in Exodus 21:6; 22:8,9,28, where the judges of Israel are being spoken of collectively as "HA ELOHIM" (which phrase can also be translated as "The God." The Jews were, no doubt, familiar with the terminology of Job regarding these angels, that is, as "sons of God." (Job 1:6; 2:1; 38:7) I am also sure that they were aware of the terminology of Psalm 8:5 (see Hebrews 2:7). If this is what the Jews meant, then they were not saying that Jesus was claiming to be equal with God Almighty, that he was claiming to be equal to the angels. Of course, as a human, Jesus was not making such a claim, although, I believe that before he became a human he was the only-begotten firstborn mighty one (THEOS) of the Most High (John 1:1,18; 3:16-18; Colossians 1:15), pre-eminently one step above the angels (since the angels were made through Jesus -- Colossians 1:15,16,18), and thus Jesus was never actually equal to the angels. However, as a human, he was one step below that of the angels. (John 1:14; Colossians 15:40; Hebrews 2:9; 5:7) After his being raised from the dead, he was exalted far above the angels. (Ephesians 1:21; Colossians 1:18; 2:9,10; Philippians 2:9; Hebrews 1:4,6; 1 Peter 3:22) So he has never been equal to the angels, and never will be, equal to the angels. Others, however, proclaim that the Jews of that time believed that "God begets God," and thus for God to beget a son, the son would be equal to God who begot the son. As yet no one has produced any proof that the Jews of that age actually took such a view. They may have adopted such a view from Hellenistic philosophy. The idea as I have seen it presented argues, that since man begets man, dog begets dog, and bird begets bird, then God begets God. Such a view actually brings God down so as to be subject to reproductive limits that God set for his physical living creation on earth. To take this kind of reasoning to its logical conclusion, however, would necessitate that God need a wife with whom to have intercourse before any begetting could take place (and I have actually heard some argue that he did have a wife -- claiming the "person" of God's holy spirit (God's finger is God's wife? -- Matthew 12:28; Luke 11:20) is God's wife. Thus, it would appear that God had sexual intercourse with his holy spirit (his finger) and thus produced the only-begotten son, although none of this happened at any point in time, but rather it is alleged to have happened outside of all time, in an alleged dimension in which time of any sort does not exist, etc. Thus the son of God is now and for all eternity past and for all eternity future being begotten by sexual intercourse of God with his finger!

Of course, most trinitarians do not claim that God's wife is his holy spirit, but most do claim that for God to beget another person, that person has to be God, in effect, since there is one God, that one God begets the one God who is the one God who does the one God begetting. To accommodate this apparent self-contradiction, the trinitarian has conjured and added to the scriptures a story about one person of God who begets another person of God who is not the first person of God but yet who is the one God who has existed from all eternity! Most trinitarians do argue that this begetting is in an alleged eternity that is totally outside of any time, and thus that right now Jesus is and always will be in the condition of being begotten by God (which they would take to mean only the person of God that they call "God the Father" who is not part of God, but all of God, as distinct from the person of God whom they call "God the Son", who is also not part of God, but all of God.)

In John 10:33, the claim of the Jewish leaders was that Jesus was a human sinner, not the Son of God as Jesus claimed to be. And then, because Jesus claimed to be the Son of God, it appears that they may have added to this the false claim that Jesus was claiming to be God. If this was their claim, then this not something that Jesus claimed for himself. However, if their claim was that Jesus, by calling God his father, was making himself "god" in the sense that an angel, as a son of God, might be called elohim, Jesus most certainly was that in his prehuman existence, since he had been more than angel.

Getting back to John 5:17,18, however, regardless of what the deceived and deceiving Jewish leaders believed, taught or thought, the scriptures never say that the son of the Most High would have to be Most High. Such a thought has to be added to and read into the scriptures. If the Jews believed this, their belief in such an idea is irrelevant to whether Jesus himself actually claimed to be equal to his God, which, of course, Jesus never claimed such an idea. The only Most High can certainly beget, bring forth into being, a son, who is not the Most High. That which is begotten by the Most High does not have to be the Most High.

Nevertheless, the stated cause is only a justification of their desire to kill Jesus; the stated cause does not reveal the real reason in their hearts. John 5:18, however, adds to the evidence that they had already determined in their hearts to kill Jesus before their attempts to do so as related in John 8:59 or John 10:33.

Jesus had earlier stated that the world "hates me, because I testify about it, that its works are evil." (John 7:7) He had told these Jewish leaders: "You do the works of your father." (John 8:41) But he claimed for himself: "I must work the works of him who sent me." (John 9:4) [Who sent Jesus? It was Jehovah (Jehovah), the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, who sent Jesus, and has already been shown.] And again: "The works that I do in my Father's name, these testify about me." (John 10:25) [In whose name did Jesus do his works? As has already been shown by prophecy (Deuteronomy 18:15-19), Jesus did his works in the name of Jehovah, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.] Thus, John testified concerning this: "Everyone who does evil hates the light, and doesn't come to the light, for fear that his works would be reproved." (John 3:20)

Thus, the Jews avoided the true answer to why they sought to kill Jesus, which Jesus asked concerning in John 10:32, and produced a trumped "legal" reason for doing, as recorded in John 10:33.

To note their crafty deception, we read:

Mark 14:1

It was now two days before the feast of the Passover and the unleavened bread, and the chief priests and the scribes sought how they might seize him by deception, and kill him.

Mark 14:2

For they said, "Not during the feast, because there might be a riot of the people

Matthew 26:4

26:4

They took counsel together that they might take Jesus by deceit, and kill him.

See also our studies:

[The Oneness of Jehovah and Jesus](#)

[The Jewish Leaders' "Cause" to Kill Jesus](#)

["I am"](#)

[Psalm 82:6 ? Who Are the Gods?](#)

Related Books

Please note that we do not necessarily agree with all that is stated in these books.

[The Doctrine of the Trinity: Christianity's Self-Inflicted Wound](#) -- Presents unitarian viewpoint; denies the prehuman existence of Jesus, but otherwise, the book contains a lot of good information.

[When Jesus Became God](#) -- Gives a lot of historical background.

[The Orthodox Corruption of Scripture](#) - The Effect of Early Christological Controversies on the Text of the New Testament

[Concepts of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit](#) - A Classification and Description of the Trinitarian and Non-Trinitarian Theologies Existent Within Christendom

The following numbers represent links to sites that have used John 10:33 as an alleged proof that Jesus claimed to be his God, or equal to his God. We, of course, do not agree their conclusions.

[1](#) * [2](#) * [3](#) * [4](#) * [5](#) * [6](#) * [7](#) * [8](#) * [9](#) * [10](#)