

# "I Say: Ye Are Gods"

## An Examination of Jesus' Use of Psalm 82:6 in Defense of his Deity [Sam Shamoun http://answering-islam.org/Shamoun/john10\\_34-36.htm](http://answering-islam.org/Shamoun/john10_34-36.htm)

The Old Testament mentions some of the essential characteristics and abilities of Yahweh which demonstrate that he alone is God:

"See now that I, even I, am he, and there is no god beside me; I kill and I make alive; I wound and I heal; and there is none that can deliver out of my hand." Deuteronomy 32:39

"There is none holy like the LORD; there is none besides you; there is no rock like our God ... The LORD kills and brings to life; he brings down to Sheol and raises up." 1 Samuel 2:2, 6

"All the nations gather together, and the peoples assemble. Who among them can declare this, and show us the former things? Let them bring their witnesses to prove them right, and let them hear and say, It is true. You are my witnesses,' declares the LORD, 'and my servant whom I have chosen, that you may know and believe me and understand that I am he. Before me no god was formed, nor shall there be any after me. I, I am the LORD, and besides me there is no savior. I declared and saved and proclaimed, when there was no strange god among you; and you are my witnesses,' declares the LORD, 'and I am God. Also henceforth I am he; there is none who can deliver from my hand; I work, and who can turn it back?'" Isaiah 43:9-13

Unlike the other so-called gods (who are really no gods at all) Yahweh asserts that he can give life and prevent anyone from stopping him from accomplishing his sovereign purposes.

In light of the foregoing, we should be astonished to find the Lord Jesus making the following claims about himself:

"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. 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.' 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.'" John 10:27-33

The Lord Jesus attributes to himself the very prerogatives of God, namely the ability to grant eternal life and the sovereign power to prevent anyone from stopping him from preserving his sheep. Jesus' statement that the Father and he are one quite obviously refers to their being one in essence and power since Christ is able to do what only the Almighty God can do.

It is little wonder that the Jews correctly concluded that Jesus was claiming to be God. They obviously realized that Jesus was making claims which the OT scriptures show that only Yahweh could say and actually carry out.

Unfortunately, not everyone is willing to accept the plain meaning of Jesus' words. There are Anti-Trinitarian groups who are quick to point out what follows next in John 10 as an attempt of undermining the absolute Deity of Christ:

"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"?"' John 10:34-36

Anti-Trinitarians view Jesus' response as a denial of the charge that he made himself out to be God. Jesus' reference to a class of gods is taken as Christ's own understanding of his nature and position, i.e. that he considered himself to be on the same level of these so-called gods and not co-equal with the Father.

To truly understand what Jesus meant here, we need to examine the particular passage that Christ cited by looking at its context carefully. We must further examine whether the theology of the Holy Bible as a whole allows for the existence of other divine beings besides Yahweh God. Finally, we must look at the theological context of John's Gospel and see whether Jesus is presented as the eternal Son of God, or as a creature that represents the true God.

## The gods of Psalm 82

The Law which Jesus refers to in John 10:34 is actually a quote from Psalm 82, specifically verse 6. For the sake of properly understanding Jesus' intent in using this particular text we quote the entire Psalm:

A Psalm of Asaph.

<sup>1</sup>God has taken his place in the divine council; in the midst of the gods he holds judgment:

<sup>2</sup>"How long will you judge unjustly and show partiality to the wicked? *Selah*

<sup>3</sup>Give justice to the weak and the fatherless; maintain the right of the afflicted and the destitute.

<sup>4</sup>Rescue the weak and the needy; deliver them from the hand of the wicked."

<sup>5</sup>They have neither knowledge nor understanding, they walk about in darkness; all the foundations of the earth are shaken.

<sup>6</sup>I said, "You are gods, sons of the Most High, all of you;

<sup>7</sup>nevertheless, like men you shall die, and fall like any prince."

<sup>8</sup>Arise, O God, judge the earth; for you shall inherit all the nations!

Psalm 82 is a petition beseeching God to judge the so-called gods for their failure to maintain justice and righteousness. It is clear from the context that the gods are the men whom God appointed to rule and judge the people.<sup>[1]</sup>

The Psalmist provides support for viewing these gods as human beings since in v. 7 he says that they shall die like all other men. In fact, the following Psalm echoes the same theme of 82 and calls human judges gods:

"Do you indeed speak righteousness, O gods? Do you judge uprightly, O sons of men? No, in heart you work unrighteousness; On earth you weigh out the violence of your hands. The wicked are estranged from the womb; These who speak lies go astray from birth. They have venom like the venom of a serpent; Like a deaf cobra that stops up its ear, So that it does not hear the voice of charmers, Or a skillful caster of spells. O God, shatter their teeth in their mouth; Break out the fangs of the young lions, O LORD. Let them flow away like water that runs off; When he aims his arrows, let them be as headless shafts. Let them be as a snail which melts away as it goes along, Like the miscarriages of a woman which never see the sun. Before your pots can feel the fire of thorns He will sweep them away with a whirlwind, the green and the burning alike. The righteous will rejoice when he sees the vengeance; He will wash his feet in the blood of the wicked. And men will say, 'Surely there is a reward for the righteous; Surely there is a God who judges on earth!'" Psalm 58:1-11 NASB

Now, in order to identify who exactly were these human rulers/judges we need to look at other passages of Scripture:

"At that time I said to you, 'I am not able to bear you by myself. The LORD your God has multiplied you, and behold, you are today as numerous as the stars of heaven. May the LORD, the God of your fathers, make you a thousand times as many as you are and bless you, as he has promised you! How can I bear by myself the weight and burden of you and your strife? *Choose for your tribes wise, understanding, and experienced men, and I will appoint them as your heads.*' And you answered me, 'The thing that you have spoken is good for us to do.' So I took the heads of your tribes, wise and experienced men, and set them as heads over you, commanders of thousands, commanders of hundreds, commanders of fifties, commanders of tens, and officers, throughout your tribes. *And I charged your judges at that time, 'Hear the cases between your brothers, and judge righteously between a man and his brother or the alien who is with him. You shall not be partial in judgment. You shall hear the small and the great alike. You shall not be intimidated by anyone, for the judgment is God's. And the case that is too hard for you, you shall bring to me, and I will hear it.'* And I commanded you at that time all the things that you should do." Deuteronomy 1:9-17

"If any case arises requiring decision between one kind of homicide and another, one kind of legal right and another, or one kind of assault and another, any case within your towns that is too difficult for you, then you shall arise and go up to the place that the LORD your God will choose. *And you shall come to the Levitical priests and to the judge who is in office in those days, and you shall consult them, and they shall declare to you the decision.* Then you shall do according to what they declare to you from that place that the LORD will choose. And you shall be careful to do according to all that they direct you. According to the instructions that they give you, and according to the decision which they pronounce to you, you shall do. You shall not turn aside from the verdict that they declare to you, either to the right hand or to the left. The man who acts presumptuously by not obeying the priest who stands to minister there before the LORD your God, or the judge, that man shall die. So you shall purge the evil from Israel. And all the people shall hear and fear and not act presumptuously again." Deuteronomy 17:8-14

"Jehoshaphat lived at Jerusalem. And he went out again among the people, from Beersheba to the hill country of Ephraim, and brought them back to the LORD, the God of their fathers. *He appointed judges in the land in all the fortified cities of Judah, city by city, and said to the judges, 'Consider what you do, for you judge not for man but for the LORD. He is with you in giving judgment. Now then, let the fear of the LORD be upon you. Be careful what you do, for there is no injustice with the LORD our God, or partiality or taking bribes.'* Moreover, in Jerusalem Jehoshaphat appointed certain Levites and priests and heads of families of Israel, to give judgment for the LORD and to decide disputed cases. They had their seat at Jerusalem. And he charged them: 'Thus you shall do in the fear of the LORD, in faithfulness, and with your whole heart: whenever a case comes to you from your brothers who live in their cities, concerning bloodshed, law or commandment, statutes or rules, then you shall warn them, that they may not incur guilt before the LORD and wrath may not come upon you and your brothers. Thus you shall do, and you will not incur guilt. And behold, Amariah the chief priest is over you in all matters of the LORD; and Zebadiah the son of Ishmael, the governor of the house of Judah, in all the king's matters, and the Levites will serve you as officers. Deal courageously, and may the LORD be with the upright!'" 2 Chronicles 19:4-11

## Finally:

"Your throne, O God, is forever and ever. The scepter of your kingdom is a scepter of uprightness; you have loved righteousness and hated wickedness. Therefore God, your God, has anointed you with the oil of gladness beyond your companions;" Psalm 45:6-7

In context, the preceding Psalm is addressed to the King of Israel. The Psalmist applies the term God (Hebrew- *Elohim*) to Israel's King.<sup>[2]</sup>

An essential function of the King was to rule the nation in accordance with the Law of God:

"And when he sits on the throne of his kingdom, he shall write for himself in a book a copy of this law, approved by the Levitical priests. And it shall be with him, and he shall read in it all the days of his life, that he may learn to fear the LORD his God by keeping all the words of this law and these statutes, and doing them, that his heart may not be lifted up above his brothers, and that he may not turn aside from the commandment, either to the right hand or to the left, so that he may continue long in his kingdom, he and his children, in Israel." Deuteronomy 17:18-20

The foregoing shows that these rulers were men chosen from amongst the children of Israel, and in most cases they were the Levitical priests. In other places of the Bible the Levites are condemned for failing to uphold the Law and administering justice:

"And now, O priests, this command is for you. If you will not listen, if you will not take it to heart to give honor to my name, says the LORD of hosts, then I will send the curse upon you and I will curse your blessings. Indeed, I have already cursed them, because you do not lay it to heart. Behold, I will rebuke your offspring, and spread dung on your faces, the dung of your offerings, and you shall be taken away with it. So shall you know that I have sent this command to you, that my covenant with Levi may stand, says the LORD of hosts. My covenant with him was one of life and peace, and I gave them to him. It was a covenant of fear, and he feared me. He stood in awe of my name. *True instruction was in his mouth, and no wrong was found on his lips. He walked with me in peace and uprightness, and he turned many from iniquity. For the lips of a priest should guard knowledge, and people should seek instruction from his mouth, for he is the messenger of the LORD of hosts.* But you have turned aside from the way. You have caused many to stumble by your instruction. You have corrupted the covenant of Levi, says the LORD of hosts, and so I make you despised and abased before all the people, inasmuch as you do not keep my ways *but show partiality in your instruction.*" Malachi 2:1-9

With the foregoing in mind, we can now appreciate the Psalmist's cry to God. The Levites and those assigned to rule and judge according to the Law acted as God's representatives, and in that case functioned as gods to the people. Something similar is said of Moses' relationship to Pharaoh and Aaron:

"He shall speak for you to the people, and he shall be your mouth, and you shall be as God to him." Exodus 4:16

"And the LORD said to Moses, 'See, I have made you like God to Pharaoh, and your brother Aaron shall be your prophet.'" Exodus 7:1

The Levites and the rulers failed to live in conformity to God's Law and perverted justice. The Psalmist, in his anguish, cries out to God to bring judgment on the rulers for perverting His ways and for acting corruptly towards God's covenant people.

Yet it is clear that neither the Levites nor Israel's rulers were actual gods. The theology of the Psalms makes it abundantly evident that the gods of Psalm 82 could not have been some lesser divine beings that exist alongside Yahweh. The Psalms quite explicitly affirm the absolute uniqueness of Yahweh as the only true God:

"that they may know that you alone, whose name is the LORD, are the Most High over all the earth." Psalm 83:18

"There is none like you among the gods, O Lord, nor are there any works like yours. All the nations you have made shall come and worship before you, O Lord, and shall glorify your name. For you are great and do wondrous things; you ALONE are God." Psalm 86:8-10

"For who in the skies can be compared to the LORD? Who among the heavenly beings is like the LORD, a God greatly to be feared in the council of the holy ones, and awesome above all who are around him? O LORD God of hosts, who is mighty as you are, O LORD, with your faithfulness all around you?" Psalm 89:6-8

Astonishingly, the NT teaches that the Lord Jesus is exactly like his Father, and has the ability to do everything that his Father does:

"The man went away and told the Jews that it was Jesus who had healed him. And this was why the Jews were persecuting Jesus, because he was doing these things on the Sabbath. But Jesus answered them, 'My Father is working until now, and I am working.' This was why the Jews were seeking all the more to kill him, because not only was he breaking the Sabbath, but he was even calling God his own Father, making himself equal with God. So Jesus said to them, 'Truly, truly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of his own accord, but only what he sees the Father doing. For whatever the Father does, that the Son does likewise. For the Father loves the Son and shows him all that he himself is doing. And greater works than these will he show him, so that you may marvel. For as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, so also the Son gives life to whom he will. The Father judges no one, but has given all judgment to the Son, that all may honor the Son, just as they honor the Father. Whoever does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent him. Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life. He does not come into judgment, but has passed from death to life. Truly, truly, I say to you, an hour is coming, and is now here, when the dead will hear THE VOICE OF THE SON OF GOD, and those who hear will live. For as the Father has life in himself, so he has granted the Son also to have life in himself. And he has given him authority to execute judgment, because he is the Son of Man. Do not marvel at this, for an hour is coming when all who are in the tombs will hear HIS VOICE and come out, those who have done good to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil to the resurrection of judgment." John 5:15-29

"but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world. He is the radiance of the glory of God and THE EXACT IMPRINT OF HIS NATURE, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power. After making purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high," Hebrews 1:2-3

The words of the Psalmists inevitably lead to Jesus being the only true God. Otherwise, if Christ isn't Yahweh then he couldn't be exactly like his Father nor could he perform the very same kinds of works that his Father performs.

The monotheism of the Psalms is in perfect conformity and basically reiterates the theology of the Pentateuch:

"To you it was shown, that you might know that the LORD is God; there is no other besides him .. know therefore today, and lay it to your heart, that the LORD is God IN HEAVEN above and ON THE EARTH beneath; THERE IS NO OTHER." Deuteronomy 4:35, 39

The preceding citations lead us to conclude that the only way for anyone besides Yahweh to be called God or a god is in a functional or representational sense.

With the foregoing in mind, we are now in a better position to more fully appreciate Jesus' intent in citing Psalm 82:6 to defend his divine claims.

## Jesus, John and Gods

The first thing to note is that John's theology is thoroughly consistent with the OT that there is only one God:

"How can you believe, when you receive glory from one another and do not seek the glory that comes from the only God?" John 5:44

"When Jesus had spoken these words, he lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, 'Father, the hour has come; glorify your Son that the Son may glorify you, since you have given him authority over all flesh, to give eternal life to all whom you have given him. And this is eternal life, that they know you the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent. I glorified you on earth, having accomplished the work that you gave me to do. And now, Father, glorify me in your own presence with the glory that I had with you before the world existed.'" John 17:1-5

John quotes the words of the Lord Jesus to show that there are no other gods besides the one true God. For Christ to then acknowledge the existence of other gods would be a clear contradiction, which shows that Jesus was obviously not suggesting that these were actual gods at all. He simply used them as an example to prove a specific point. More on this below.

Second, the context shows that Jesus wasn't placing himself on the level of the other so-called gods. We know this because of the following reasons:

- A. We already saw that in John 10:28 Jesus claimed the very prerogatives of Yahweh God.
- B. In John 10:34-36 Jesus implicitly places himself on the level of the Word of God that was directed against the so-called "gods."

Please note the comparison:

... he called them gods to whom the word of God came ...

... say of him whom the Father consecrated and sent into the world ...

Just as the Word spoken against the judges came from God, the Lord Jesus also came from God to the people of Israel. Jesus, like the spoken and inscripturated Word, originates from God and entered the world with the specific purpose of perfectly revealing God's will to man. In fact, John identifies Jesus as the eternal Word of God who became flesh:

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made ... And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth ... No one has ever seen God; the only God, who is at the Father's side, he has made him known." John 1:1-3, 14, 18

It is little wonder that throughout the Gospel of John the Lord constantly emphasizes his preexistence:

"Jesus said to them, 'If God were your Father, you would love me, for I came from God and I am here. I came not of my own accord, but He sent me.'" John 8:42

"Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he had come from God and was going back to God," John 13:3

"for the Father himself loves you, because you have loved me and have believed that I came from God. I came from the Father and have come into the world, and now I am leaving the world and going to the Father." John 16:27-28

Jesus clearly doesn't place himself on the same level of being with the gods of Psalm 82:6, but on a much higher and exalted level. How much higher? Taking his words in context, Jesus explicitly states that he originates from the Father in heaven and is co-equal to the Father, being able to do what God alone can do.

The reader maybe wondering as to why then did Jesus mention the gods in the first place if he wasn't placing himself on their level? It is really quite simple. Jesus' point here is to show that since the Scriptures apply the term "gods" to

individuals who represent God without this being blasphemous then the Jews cannot charge Jesus with blasphemy for calling or making himself God; especially when Jesus does works to prove that he is God's eternal Son, precisely the point Jesus makes in the conclusion of the chapter:

"If I am not doing the works of my Father, then do not believe me; but if I do them, even though you do not believe me, believe the works, that you may know and understand that the Father is in me and I am in the Father." Again they sought to arrest him, but he escaped from their hands." John 10:37-39

Note that the Jews tried all the more to kill Christ since they knew from his words that he didn't deny their accusation. They correctly concluded that Jesus' comments only reinforced their charge that he was claiming to be God.<sup>[3]</sup>

To summarize the data, we discover that:

1. The Holy Bible affirms that there is only one God.
2. Jesus claims the very prerogatives of the one God.
3. Jesus, like the oral and written Word, originates from God since he is the eternal Word made flesh.
4. Much like the Word that came in judgment against the so-called gods was on a higher plane than they were, Jesus likewise is on a higher level than the rest of the so-called gods.
5. The so-called gods only represented the true God, whereas Jesus not only represents God but he is fully God in essence and nature.
6. Since Scripture could apply the term gods to God's representatives without this being considered blasphemy, then Jesus claiming to be God cannot be considered blasphemous especially when he performs divine works to prove that he is essentially incarnate Deity.

## Recommended Reading

For those interested in reading slightly different views, but which essentially agree with our position that Christ wasn't claiming to be on the same level of the rest of the gods, we recommend the following articles:

[http://forananswer.org/John/Jn10\\_30.htm](http://forananswer.org/John/Jn10_30.htm)

[http://forananswer.org/John/Jn10\\_34.htm](http://forananswer.org/John/Jn10_34.htm)

<http://answering-islam.org/BibleCom/jn10-34-36.html>

<http://www.iclnet.org/pub/resources/text/cri/cri-jrnl/web/crj0018a.html>

## Notes

[1] There are others, of course, who disagree with our view that the gods of Psalm 82 are the human judges appointed by God to rule over his people. For instance, the NET Bible translators take the view that Psalm 82 is referring to the Canaanite pantheon:

**3tn** The phrase *la tdu*, "assembly of El," appears only here in the OT. (1) Some understand "El" to refer to God himself. In this case he is pictured presiding over his own heavenly assembly. (2) Others take *la* as a superlative here ("God stands in the *great* assembly"), as in Pss 36:6 and 80:10. (3) The present translation assumes this is a reference to the Canaanite high god El, who presided over the Canaanite divine assembly. (See Isa 14:13, where El's assembly is called "the stars of El.") In the Ugaritic myths the phrase *'dt 'ilm* refers to the "assembly of the gods," who congregate in King Kirtu's house, where Baal asks El to bless Kirtu's house (see J. C. L. Gibson, *Canaanite Myths and Legends*, 91). If the Canaanite divine assembly is referred to here in Ps 82:1, then the psalm must be understood as a bold polemic against Canaanite religion. Israel's God invades El's assembly, denounces its gods as failing to uphold justice, and announces their coming demise. For an interpretation of the psalm along these lines, see W. VanGemeren, "Psalms," in *EBC* 5:533-36.

**4sn** The present translation assumes that the Hebrew term *<yhla* ("gods") here refers to the pagan gods who supposedly comprise El's assembly according to Canaanite religion. Those who reject the polemical view of the psalm prefer to see the referent as human judges or rulers (*<yhla* sometimes refers to officials appointed by God, see Exod 21:6; 22:8-9; Ps 45:6) or as angelic beings (*<yhla* sometimes refers to angelic beings, see Gen 3:5; Ps 8:5).

**5sn** The picture of God rendering *judgment* among the gods clearly depicts his sovereign authority as universal king (see v. 8, where the psalmist boldly affirms this truth). ([http://www.bible.org/netbible/psa82\\_notes.htm](http://www.bible.org/netbible/psa82_notes.htm))

Whatever interpretation one holds, our point still stands. Whether referring to the Canaanite pantheon, angels, or men one thing is certain; none of them are lesser divine beings that exist alongside the only true Divine Being, the only one who is God in the eternal and absolute sense, Yahweh Elohim.

[2] Differences of opinion exist among translators regarding the precise translation of Psalm 45:6, especially its use in Hebrews 1:8. Some suggest that the passage should be rendered as, "God is your throne," "your throne is God," or "your throne is [of] God."

The NET Bible translators present the reasons for taking God in Hebrews 1:8 as a vocative (direct address) in reference to the Son:

**24tn** Or possibly, "Your throne is God forever and ever." This translation is quite doubtful, however, since (1) in the context the Son is being contrasted to the angels and is presented as far better than they. The imagery of God being the Son's throne would seem to be of God being his authority. If so, in what sense could this *not* be said of the angels? In what sense is the Son thus contrasted with the angels? (2) The *mevn...dev* (*men...de*) construction that connects v. 7 with v. 8 clearly lays out this contrast: "On the one hand, he says of the angels...on the other hand, he says of the Son." Thus, although it is grammatically *possible* that *qeov* (*qeos*) in v. 8 should be taken as a predicate nominative, the context and the correlative conjunctions are decidedly against it. Hebrews 1:8 is thus a strong affirmation of the deity of Christ. ([http://www.bible.org/netbible/heb1\\_notes.htm#124](http://www.bible.org/netbible/heb1_notes.htm#124))

For more information we highly recommend Murray J. Harris' discussion of this passage in his book, *Jesus as God: The New Testament Use of Theos in Reference to Jesus* (Baker Book House; January 1993, ASIN: 0801043700), pp. 187-228.

[3] Again, the NET translators provide a different explanation why Jesus used Psalm 82:6 in his defense:

**84sn** A quotation from Ps 82:6. Technically the Psalms are not part of the OT "law" (which usually referred to the five books of Moses), but occasionally the term "law" was applied to the entire OT, as here. The problem in this verse concerns the meaning of Jesus' quotation from Ps 82:6. It is important to look at the OT context: The whole line reads "I say, you are gods, sons of the Most High, all of you." Jesus will pick up on the term "sons of the Most High" in 10:36, where he refers to himself as the *Son of God*. The psalm was understood in rabbinic circles as an attack on unjust judges who, though they have been given the title "gods" because of their quasi-divine function of exercising judgment, are just as mortal as other men. What is the argument here? It is often thought to be as follows: If it was an OT practice to refer to men like the judges as gods, and not blasphemy, why did the Jewish authorities object when this term was applied to Jesus? This really doesn't seem to fit the context, however, since if that were the case Jesus would not be making any claim for "divinity" for himself over and above any other human being—and therefore he would not be subject to the charge of blasphemy. Rather, this is evidently a case of arguing from the lesser to the greater, a common form of rabbinic argument. The reason the OT judges could be called gods is because they were vehicles of the word of God (cf. 10:35). But granting that premise, Jesus deserves much more than they to be called God. He is the Word incarnate, whom the Father sanctified and sent into the world to save the world. In light of the prologue to the Gospel of John, it seems this interpretation would have been most natural for the author. If it is permissible to call men "gods" because they were the vehicles of the word of God, how much more permissible is it to use the word "God" of him who is the Word of God? ([http://www.bible.org/netbible/joh10\\_notes.htm#1084](http://www.bible.org/netbible/joh10_notes.htm#1084))

Regardless of the interpretation, the NET translators essentially concur with our assessment that Jesus didn't view himself on the same level of being with these other gods. Christ considered himself to be infinitely greater and more exalted than they.