

The Hidden Superpower of the Gods

John 10:17-42

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Video and audio versions available online:

<https://relentless-love.org/sermons/the-hidden-superpower-of-the-gods/>

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This document was prepared by Heather Eades using Peter's notes and the video version of this sermon. If you encounter any significant discrepancies or errors in this document, please email us at transcripts@thesanctuarydowntown.org. Thank you!

Message

This is our 29th message from the Gospel of John. In Chapter 9, Jesus healed a man born blind, and we realized that we were all born blind, and sin is blindness to our own blindness. Jesus says, "If you were blind (if you saw that you don't see) you would have no sin, but because you say, 'we see,' your sin remains." He heals the guy with spit, which to us seems quite degrading, offensive, and humiliating. But when the Jews keep asking him, "Are you the man born blind?" He keeps answering 'I Am,' which is a name for God. It seems to anger everyone, particularly the Pharisees. So, Jesus starts talking about sheep that do not hear the Shepherds voice. Then He tells "the Jews" that they are not of his sheep. He might as well just spit in their ears as well as their eyes.

John 10:16b-22a:

... So there will be one flock and one shepherd. ¹⁷ For this reason [*dia*: by means of, Through (this)] the Father loves me, because [*hoti*: that] I lay down my life [*psyche*] that [*hina*: in order that] I may take it up again. ¹⁸ No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord [Not because I have to but because I want to]. I have authority [*exousia*: "out of being," power] to lay it down, and I have authority [*exousia*] to take it up again. This charge [*entole*: commandment] I have received from my Father." ¹⁹ There was again a division among the Jews because of these words. ²⁰ Many of them said, "He has a demon, and is insane; why listen to him?" ²¹ Others said, "These are not the words of one who is oppressed by a demon. Can a demon open the eyes of the blind?" ²² At that time the Feast of Dedication took place at Jerusalem

That's Hanukah; It commemorates the day that the temple was rededicated after being defiled by Antiochus Epiphanies, AND it looks forward to the day the temple is filled with eternal light. Jesus already told us, "I am the light," and "Destroy this temple and I'll rebuild it in three days." That's the seventh sign that is the substance.

John 10:22b-23:

It was winter, ²³ and Jesus was walking in the temple, in the colonnade of Solomon.

Remember that Solomon, the Son of David, built a house for the Lord.

And Jesus, the Son of David, builds a house for the Lord with himself.

John 10:24-27:

So the Jews gathered around him and said to him, “How long will you keep us in suspense? If you are the Christ, tell us plainly.” ²⁵ Jesus answered them, “I told you, and you do not believe. The works that I do in my Father’s name bear witness about me, ²⁶ but you do not believe because you (pl: “y’all”) are not among [ek: of] my sheep.” ²⁷ My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me.

We talked about this last week, he says that “the Jews” are not of his sheep. In Chapter 8 he told the Jews that [quote] “had believed in him,” “You are of your father the devil, and your will is to do your father’s desires. He was a murderer from the beginning. When he lies, he speaks of his own character, for he is a liar and the father of lies, you are not of God.” Now he says, “Y’all are not of my sheep.” The King of the Jews says this to “the Jews,” the remnant of the chosen people, who were told to pray “the Lord is my shepherd.” And so, we asked, is anyone of his flock... and not the spawn of the devil?

John 10: 28-33:

I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand. ²⁹ My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father’s hand. ³⁰ Jesus says, “I and the Father are one.” ³¹ The Jews picked up stones again to stone him. ³² Jesus answered them, “I have shown you many good works from the Father; for which of them are you going to stone me?” ³³ The Jews answered him, “It is not for a good work that we are going to stone you but for blasphemy, because you, being a man, make yourself God.”

And that is a problem... (They’re catching on to all these “I am” statements). I went to seminary in the 80’s. At the time we were all freaking out about the new age movement, Shirley McClain, and the eastern mysticism creeping into our culture. Men making themselves God is a real problem in Scripture. In 42 BC the Roman Senate declared Julius Ceaser to be a god. In 40AD just after the death of Christ, Caligula declared himself to be a god. Thousands of Christians lost their lives because they wouldn’t worship the emperor—the Beast from the Sea in the Revelation given to John.

In Isaiah 14 God tells Israel to take up this taunt against the king of Babylon:

- ¹² “How you are fallen from heaven, O Day Star (Lucifer), son of Dawn!...
- ¹³ You said in your heart, ‘I will ascend to heaven...
- ¹⁴ I will make myself like the Most High.’
- ¹⁵ But you are brought down to Sheol, to the far reaches of the pit.

Some think he’s talking about Satan, some think it’s Lucifer, Isaiah refers to him as the King of Babylon—maybe it’s all of the above.

In Daniel 4, King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon is walking on his roof where he congratulates himself for building Babylon. And the Word of God comes to him and fulfills what Daniel had told him: Nebuchadnezzar, like a great tree, is chopped down to a stump and reduced to a beast eating grass

like an ox until he comes to know that the Most High gives the kingdom to whomever he chooses. And he does come to know; at “the end of days,”ⁱⁱ a new tree grows from the old stump and Nebuchadnezzar worships.ⁱⁱⁱ

In Acts 12:22 The People of Tyre and Sidon praised King Herod saying, “The voice of a god, and not of man!” And v. 23 “Immediately an angel of the Lord struck him down, because he did not give God the glory, and he was eaten by worms and breathed his last.” And yet, his bones were in the Valley of Dry bones- bones that do come to life.

In Revelation 19, John sees the King of Kings with a sword issuing from his mouth and the Kings of the earth gathered against him. And an angel calls to the birds to come eat the flesh of the kings and all men.

And that makes some sense, doesn't it? Don't all men, not just kings, want to make themselves god or at least a god? God owns everything and I want to own everything, but if I own everything, I can never be given anything. I can't know Grace. God does everything and I want to do everything, but if I do everything, I can't do anything with anyone. I have to dance alone. God is absolutely free; He does whatever he wants, but if I do whatever I want, I must destroy the wants of all who disagree with me. God is most glorious, so of course I want to be God, but to win the beauty pageant I must convince myself that everyone is uglier than me.

- To make yourself wonderful is to trap yourself in a world without wonder.
- To make yourself The best is to make everyone else the worst.
- To make yourself first is to make everyone else last.
- To own everything, you end up killing everyone.

Two Texans were trying to impress each other with the size of their ranches. One asked the other, “What's the name of your ranch?” He replied, “The Rocking R, ABC, Flying W, Circle C, Bar U, Staple Four, Box D, Rolling M, Rainbow's End, Silver Spur Ranch.” The questioner was much impressed and exclaimed, “Whew! That's sure some name! How many head of cattle do you run?” The rancher answered, “Well, not many. Very few survive the branding.”

“To make yourself a god is to choose to be all alone in a world that is dead. I think it must be hell.” ~Shirley McClain.

Sigmund Freud was a fan of Charles Darwin and his theory that all life arose from violent competition. Darwin had conjectured that “... men originally lived in hordes, each under the domination of a single powerful ... and jealous male.” So, in 1913, in his book Totem and Taboo, Freud explained a “vision” which he believed explained the origin of religion. Freud writes:

“The father of the primal horde, since he was an unlimited despot, had seized all the women for himself; his sons, being dangerous to him as rivals, had been killed or driven away. One day, however, the sons came together ... to kill and devour their father, who had been their enemy but also their ideal [their idol].”^{iv}

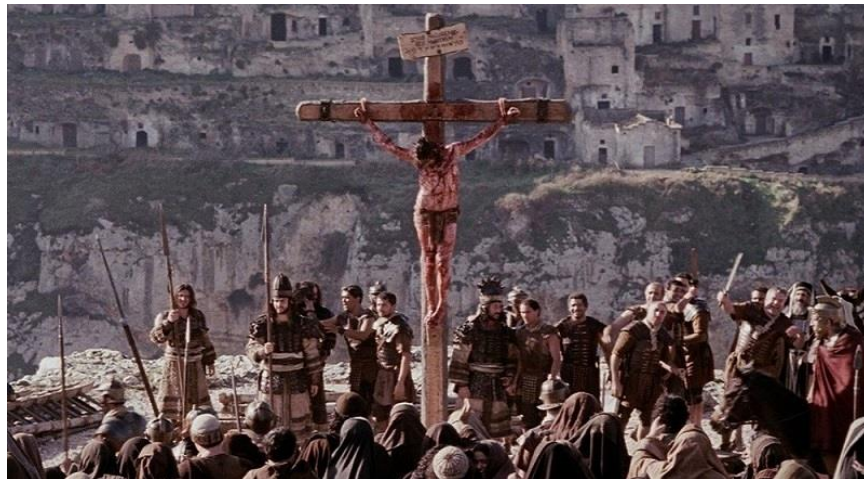
Freud conjectured that this primal jealous “deed” was the beginning of all religion: “In the beginning was the deed...” wrote Freud.

“The primal father, at once feared and hated, revered and envied, became the prototype of God himself.”

Freud argued that each clan represented this “Father-God” with a totem. He writes, “The totem feast was the commemoration of the fearful deed.” And he argued that Christian communion is the perfect example: “The totem meal still survives with but little distortion.” [totem (looking at cross), feast (looking at communion bread and wine)]. He’s arguing that Communion is the remembrance of an act of primal jealousy—the murder of our father. That’s utterly horrific, isn’t it?

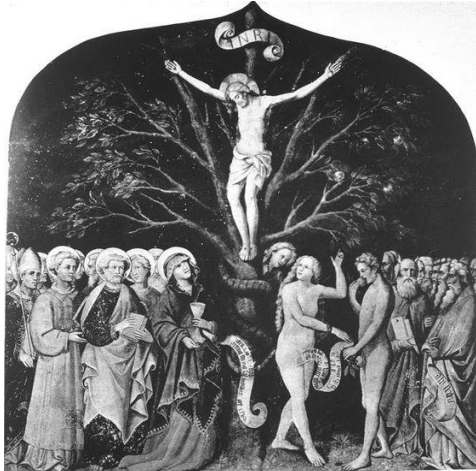
- And yet, Jesus did say, “I and the Father are one.”
- And he did take the bread and break it saying, “This is my body.”
- And he took the cup saying, “This is my blood.”
- And in the morning, it was the Jews, the last best human hope for the kingdom of God on earth... It was the Jews of all people that chanted “crucify, crucify”

Matthew and Mark tell us that they took his life out of Envy. In other words, they saw that Jesus was good and Jesus was life. They saw that Jesus was god, wanted to be god, and so took the life of god. And everything went black, quite literally.



Gibson, Mel (Director). (2004). The Passion of the Christ [Motion picture]. USA: Icon Productions.

And yet it wasn't the first time it had happened, was it?



"The Fall and Redemption of Man" by Giovanni da Modena

In the beginning, Adam and Eve, saw that the thing hanging on the tree in the middle of the garden, was good and was life, actually the image and likeness of God—and yet they didn't know what that is and who God is. They took the fruit and everything went black for they were hiding in themselves from God and from each other. And in the beginning, isn't that what we all do, usually around the age of two? Not knowing what life is, we take knowledge of good and try to make ourselves the best, which is to hope others are the worst.

- We try to be first which is to makes other the last...
- We exalt ourselves and we find ourselves alone...
- We try to be God and find ourselves unable to love...
- We compete.

And that's why the Jews, directed by their religious leaders, delivered Jesus up for crucifixion. They had knowledge of Good and Evil, what Paul would call the law; They saw but didn't see; They knew but didn't know as they ought^v; They knew but didn't know for they refused to be known. They were hiding. Jealous of Jesus, they each wanted to be Jesus, and so they killed Jesus. They were "men making themselves God."

John 10:33:

The Jews answered him, "It is not for a good work that we are going to stone you but for blasphemy, because you, being a man, make yourself God."

But from the start of the Gospel, we know that Jesus is NOT "Man making himself God"; He is, actually, God having made himself Man. John 1:1, "The Word was God." John 1:14, "And the Word became [*ginomai*] flesh." Jesus is God having made himself man. And then, He is the first man to resist the devil's temptation to make himself God. Remember? the Devil says, turn stones into bread, throw yourself down from the temple and let everyone see you fly with the angels, worship me and all the nations will worship you. Exalt yourself. But Jesus is humble, and he only does what he sees the father doing, which means that the father is humble too.

And so, God is not simply one enormous self-centered person, but actually something like three self-sacrificing persons called Love—a trinity. And now, what does it all matter? asks CS Lewis. It matters more than anything else in the world. The whole dance, or drama, or pattern of this three-Personal life is to be played out in each one of us: or (putting it the other way round) each one of us

has got to enter that pattern, take his place in that dance. There is no other way to the happiness for which we were made. Jesus is God having made himself Man, and in John 10, men trying to make themselves God project their own thoughts and feelings onto Jesus. Maybe we do that all the time.

- We project our bad will onto Jesus and assume that he died for us because he had to, when he died for us because he wants to. He is the Free Will of God. We project our sense of Justice onto God and think he has to satisfy justice, when he is Justice and satisfies himself by making us in his own image.
- We project our own wrath upon God and assume he hates us, when his wrath is revealed against all the unrighteousness in us^{vi}, the Work of the Devil that we think is us, but isn't us, and is actually our prison.
- We project our pride and shame onto God, think he needs to be worshipped by us, when, in fact, we need to worship him, so we'd forget about us.
- We project our fears onto God and cannot hear the voice of our Shepherd.

We cannot hear the voice of Love, for we assume everything is malice. We assume that he wants to take everything from us, when he desires to give everything to us including himself.

I love this line from The Lord of the Rings, Gandolph says,

"[The Enemy] weighs all things to a nicety in the scales of his malice. The only measure the enemy knows is desire, desire for power and so he judges all hearts. Into his heart the thought will not enter that any will refuse it, that having the Ring (of power) we may seek to destroy it. If we seek this we shall put him out of reckoning."

Paul tells us that Jesus "did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped but emptied himself taking the form of a slave, and being found in human form he humbled himself, to the point of death on a cross." In this way he puts the evil one out of reckoning. Darkness cannot comprehend the Light.^{vii} Humility is inconceivable to satan.

John 10:33-34:

It is not for a good work that we are going to stone you but for blasphemy, because you, being a man, make yourself God [theon: singular of theos]." ³⁴ Jesus answered them, "Is it not written in your Law, 'I said, you are gods' [theoi: plural of theos]?"

"You are gods." That's a wee bit surprising considering that Jesus has already told these folks that they were "of their father the devil, the father of lies" (John 8:44) and "unbelievers, not of his sheep" (John 10:26). But now he calls them "gods." They're obviously men making themselves gods... that's original sin. They're obviously men making themselves gods. Jesus seems to be saying that they already are gods! Just the fact that he puts "god" in the plural is a problem for us, for he's already quoted Deuteronomy saying, "Hear of Israel, the Lord our God is one."

Most supposedly Bible-believing commentators argue, "Well, Jesus didn't really mean what he said; he was just being a smart Alec. You know, as if to say, "You're called gods and obviously aren't gods, so why do you get worked up if I call myself a son of God?" But Jesus is quoting psalm 82, which doesn't make this easier but far more confusing and wonderful.

Psalm 82:1:

God [elohim] has taken his place in the divine council [“the el council”]; in the midst of the gods [elohim] he holds judgment:

Neither the ancient Rabbis nor Biblical scholars today can agree upon the identity of the divine council. Some think it represents pagan deities, gods of other nations.



That’s actually how it’s depicted in the cartoon, South Park. This is a picture of the society of Super Best Friends. Buhdda, Krishna, Mohammed (who’s censored of course), Jesus, Seaman, Lao Tse, and Joseph Smith. Each god has superpowers like invisibility, fire, talking to fish, & carpentry. Well, if Jesus really had a superpower what do you suppose it would be?

- Some think that the Divine council refers to something like this.
- Some think that the Divine council is a group of archangels.
- Some think that the Divine council is ancient Israelite judges.

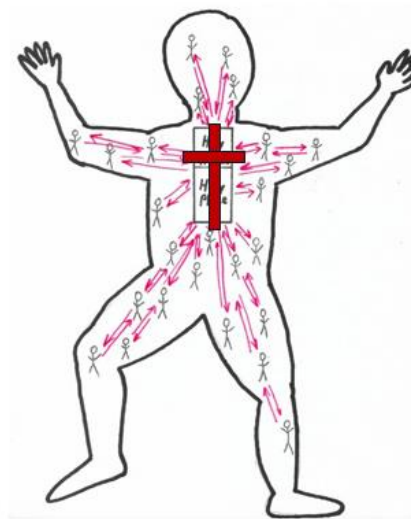
But Jesus seems to imply that it’s referring to the Jews that he’s talking to on Mt. Zion. And crazier still, he seems to think that they are all one.

Psalm 82:2-8:

How long will you judge unjustly and show partiality to the wicked? Selah ³ Give justice to the weak and the fatherless; maintain the right of the afflicted and the destitute. ⁴ Rescue the weak and the needy; deliver them from the hand of the wicked.” ⁵ They have neither knowledge nor understanding, they walk about in darkness; all the foundations of the earth are shaken. ⁶ I said, “You are gods [elohim], sons of the Most High [elyown—“God most high”], all of you; ⁷ nevertheless, like [as] ~~men~~ [adam (s.)] you shall die, and fall like [as] ~~any~~ [one] prince.” ⁸ Arise, O God [elohim], judge the earth; for you shall inherit all the nations [goyem: people]!

Jesus seems to think that this Divine council includes the Jews that he's talking to in John 10 on Mt. Zion, the Holy Mountain. And crazier still, he seems to think that they are all one God: Elohim. In Hebrew, Elohim is the plural form of the singular noun *el* or *eloah*. Although it's plural, it's always translated as singular when referring to the Lord God, for the words that modify it are often in the singular. And because Scripture tells us that Elohim is one.

Deuteronomy 6:4, "Hear Oh Israel: The Lord (Yahweh) our God (*elohim*), the Lord (Yahweh) is one." Yet in places God talks about himself as if he's more than one, like in Genesis 1 "Elohim said, 'Let us make Adam in our image after our likeness'" Jesus knows that Elohim is one, and yet he just said, "I and the Father (which is two) are one," and by quoting Psalm 82 he referred to these Jews on the Holy Mountain as Elohim (that's millions that are one). Now I know that's a lot to follow, but I have to tell you these things so that you don't stone me to death after the service. And hopefully you'll see that all of these things only make sense if what we've been learning in John, and throughout Scripture, is actually true. And that is, in the words of Paul, that, "As in Adam all die, so in Christ (the *eschatos adam*, the last *adam*, that's one *adam*) will all be made alive."



The Last (eschatos) Thing
The 7th Sign that is the Substance

"Destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it up."

Do you see? That's the seventh sign that is the substance, that is all things filled with Christ and united in Christ such that God is all in all--billions of persons and one substance, one love, one God and father of all, who is over all through all and in all." to quote Paul in Ephesians 4:5 In Genesis One, Elohim makes Adam, male and female in his image charging them to "Be fruitful and multiply and rule—have dominion, judge the earth." And that's what Elohim says to the Elohim, the Divine council, in Psalm 82, rule, judge justly, rescue the weak and yet they don't. And yet it seems that we do in Genesis One, for God makes man in his own image and everything is good and it is finished; It's the 7th day of Creation. But in Genesis Two and Three, we are still being created; it's the 6th day of creation and something appears to have gone wrong and it's still going wrong in John chapter 10. Men are trying to make themselves God, for they obviously don't believe that God makes them himself.

And so as one prince, one man, Elohim, the Adam, must die. And yet as One God, Elohim the Adam, will rise and inherit all the people. As in Adam (the first Adam) all die, so in Christ (the last Adam) will all be made alive. That should all sound very familiar to a diligent Bible reader, except that for the last 1500 years most of the institutional church has said “Impossible!” But for the first 500 years most of the early church thought: That’s the Gospel.

It’s sometimes called the recapitulation of Adam and the doctrine of *theosis*—the deification of man. In the first century St. Irenaeus wrote, “The Word became man and the Son of God son of man: so that man might become a Son of God.”^{viii}

- St. Athanasius wrote, “He was made man that we might be made god.”^{ix}
- St. Cyril of Alexandria: taught that he who is god by nature makes us gods by grace. They were just reading their Bibles (Greek guys reading Greek).
- It’s St. Peter who wrote that we are to become “partakers of the divine nature.”
- It’s St. Paul who prays that we would be filled with all the fulness of God.
- It’s St. John who actually sees us as the Body and Bride bearing the Glory of God.
- It’s Jesus in John that’s called the only begotten Son of God who says that we must also be begotten of God AND abide in him.

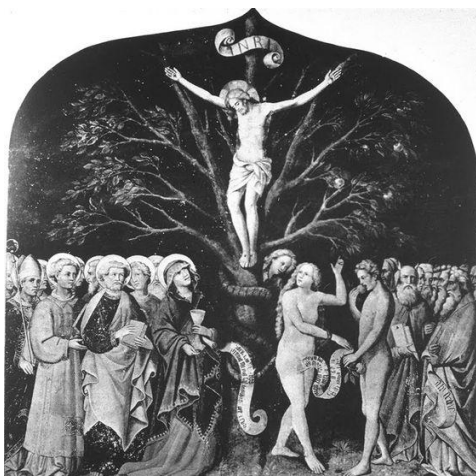
Back to our text, The Jews say, “It is not for a good work that we are going to stone you but for blasphemy, because you, being a man, make yourself God

John 10:34-35a:

Jesus answered them, “Is it not written in your Law, ‘I said, you are gods?’³⁵ If he called them gods to whom the word of God came [*ginomai*: literally “became”]—and Scripture cannot be broken...

Just notice that Jesus is the Word of God, talking to these people on Mt. Zion—the Holy Mountain—on which the Jews believed that God created Adam with a Breath and a Word. Jesus says, he called them gods to whom the word of God, literally, became. John 1:1 and 14, The Word was God... and the Word became (*ginomai*) flesh. The Word became flesh, perfectly and completely, in Jesus. But didn’t the Word also become flesh in you and maybe it still is right now?

You were created with the breath of God that is God. And all things are created with the word of God that is God. Doesn’t this make all of us God become man eventually? So, how did all of us become man making himself God? It seems as if, along the way, we all must’ve believed a lie.



"The Fall and Redemption of Man" by Giovanni da Modena

And, of course, we all did; it's what we preach about all the time. Until "everything is good" and "it is finished" it's still the sixth day of creation, and each of us has believed the serpent's lie. So, we each are man making himself God, unaware that God is making us himself. In the same way, every child tries to make himself or herself, mom or Dad, unaware that every good Mom or Dad wants to make that child themselves. My children always got in trouble trying to do what I did without me AND had a hard time believing that I actually wanted them to mow the lawn, drive the car, and make the money, even more than they did.

We all take knowledge of Good and evil trying to make ourselves in the image of God, while God commands us to make no images of him, for we are the image that he is making. Believing the devil, we do the work of the devil, we make an idol out of ourselves, we make a false self in which our true self is imprisoned. Each and all of us try to be god, and so jealous of god, we crucify god and find ourselves dead and alone. And that's when we meet God—when we know that we can't make ourselves God, but God delights in making us himself. In other words, we're saved by Grace through Faith and this not of ourselves.

John 10:34-41:

Jesus answered them, "Is it not written in your Law, 'I said, you are gods' ³⁵ If he called them gods to whom the word of God came [*ginomai*: literally became]—and Scripture cannot be broken— ³⁶ do you say of him whom the Father consecrated and sent into the world, 'You are blaspheming,' because I said, 'I am ~~the~~ [a] Son of God'? ³⁷ If I am not doing the works of my Father, then do not believe me; ³⁸ 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." ³⁹ Again they sought to arrest him, but he escaped from their hands. ⁴⁰ He went away again across the Jordan to the place where John had been baptizing at first, and there he remained. ⁴¹ And many came to him. And they said, "John did no sign, but everything that John said about this man was true."

John 1:29, John the Baptist said, "Behold the lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world." And what's "the sin of the world"? Well, it's man making himself God.

John 10:42:

And many believed (had faith) in him there.

John 6:29, “This, (faith), is the work of God” It’s actually, God making himself man. Jesus is literally your wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption.^x He is your goodness and your life. He is your eternal life. And now let me point out one last thing, Jesus didn’t say, “You will be gods,” he said, “you are gods.” You see, for Jesus “it is finished,” and when you abide in him you see that what’s true for him is true for you. And that’s your hidden superpower—Humility. Humility is knowing that you cannot make yourself God, because God has already made you himself. “We are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus, for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.” Humility is knowing that God has made you himself, even before you’ve met that self that he has made. I hope we’ve established that we each have two selves:

I have an old man, old Adam, I have a false self (the lie).

- He is the self that I think I make; He is man making himself God.
- He is my self-centered ego, my pride and my shame.
- And he is only capable of sin according to 1st John. And,

I have a New Man, the New Adam, I have a true self.

- He is the self that God has made and is revealing in time.
- He is the righteousness of Christ in me.
- And he is incapable of sin according to 1st John. He is love.

I have a self that is worse than I have ever imagined and I have a self infinitely better than I am even capable of dreaming. I cannot sort them out most of the time, but even so, I know that I’m more than happy to lose one of them, and the other of them can never be lost or destroyed. But I have no self that I can make into the image of God, and I have no self that needs to be defended or can be offended. When I believe that I am free of me and free to be me, it is humility. I’m free to love my neighbor. Humility is the power to not be offended, the power to forgive, the power to enjoy your neighbors and love the Lord your God with all your heart. Humility is billions of people losing their lives and finding them in each other—the Body of Christ. Humility is the Divine Council... the Council of God given to the gods enabling them to live His Eternal Life—the communion of Sacrifice called Love.

I think humility was Jesus’ superpower and he got it from his Dad. He got it from his Dad and he’s giving it to us. That’s how he beat the temptations of the devil. He heard the word of his Father “This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased” and he believed the word that he heard. And so, he had nothing to prove, nothing to earn, and so he could be I am. And although he was in the form of God, he did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped but emptied himself taking the form of a slave and being found in human form he humbled himself to the point of death on the cross. Therefore, God has highly exalted him and given him the name above every name that at the name of Jesus, every knee should bow and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father. (Philippians 2:6-11) It’s NOT that it might happen. In Isaiah God vows that it will happen. In the Revelation John sees that it has happened and is always happening. I think it’s the Divine Council called the Kingdom of God. I doubt that I can say this correctly, but it seems that I can abide in either of my two “me’s.”—Me-sus or Jesus.

The self I think I made; man making himself God... OR...God having made himself man; Jesus. One is an illusion, like a dream—a dream is an entire reality that I have constructed in my own mind. Have you ever dreamt your fears? Children often do. Maybe adults always do. I’ve dreamt I was a

murderer, a Nazi, a Sex offender, a Failure. When I was a child, I'd wake up to my father, sit on his lap and he'd tell me what's true—and reality would be better than all of my dreams. I'd be overjoyed that I was home in the arms of my dad. I'm not sure what this means, but it's fascinating to note that before Adam was divided in two and took the fruit from the tree. God put Adam in a deep sleep. St. Paul writes "Wake oh sleeper and rise from the dead and Christ will shine on you... we have seen the glory of God shining in the face of Christ."

When we come to the communion table, we confess that we are man, being man, who has made himself god—that's what it is to sin. And we see that God, being God, has made himself man that he might make all of us himself—that's Grace AND So He tells me who it is that we am. I confess "I took your life on the tree." He looks me in the eye and says, "I gave you my life on the tree even before you took it."

As I prepared this message, I couldn't stop thinking about the movie Blood Diamond and my favorite scene. Dia Vandy is just a little boy when he's kidnapped by an African warlord running a diamond mine in Sierra Leon. He brainwashes Dia by forcing him to do bad things and then, using his memory of the good, to convince him that he is bad. His Father, Solomon, searches for years and basically descends into hell to find him. And when he finds him, Dia pulls a gun on him.

When Jesus found us, we nailed him to a tree, but he had already told us: "That's not who you are; you are my body and blood. His Grace destroys the temple we have built and builds us into his own temple—His Father's House. Dia attempts to destroy Solomon and Solomon makes him who he is: His own house.

Video clip: *Blood Diamond*
Warner Bros (2006)

Scene opens on a young boy, Dia (Kagiso Kuypers), holding a man, Danny Archer (Leonardo DiCaprio) at gun point. His father Solomon (Djimon Hounsou) speaks to him.

Solomon Dia! Look at me. Look at me. What are you doing? You are Dia Vandy of the proud Mende tribe.

Dia points the gun at his father as he speaks.

Solomon You are a good boy who loves soccer and school. Your mother loves you so much. She waits by the fire making plantains with your sister N'Yanda and the new baby.

Tears fall from the eyes of Dia and his father, as his father moves slowly toward him.

Solomon The cows wait for you and Babu, the wild dog who minds no one but you. I know they made you do bad things, but you are not a bad boy. I am you father who loves you. And you will come home with me and be my son again.

Dia lowers the gun as his father touches the side of his face and pulls him close into a hug.

If you ever wonder what we're doing here at the Sanctuary, this is it. We're confessing that we are people who have made themselves god. And we are believing that God has made himself us.

Communion

He took the bread and broke it saying this is my body given to you. Take and eat and do it in remembrance of me. And in the same way, he took the cup saying, this is the covenant in my blood. Drink of it all of you. Dark cups are wine. Light cups are Juice. Wake up.

Benediction

In John 16:14, at the last supper Jesus said, “[The Spirit] will glorify me, for he will take what is mine and declare it to you. All that the Father has is mine; therefore I said that he will take what is mine and declare it to you.”

You just took the Body and Blood. Now you are the Body and Blood. When you believe it, you will live as His Body and Blood. And until you do, it would be wise to keep coming back in order to confess: I have made myself god, and then, hear him say: And I have made myself you, my beloved child.

Video clips: A compilation of God's voice clips
The Ten Commandments (1956)
History of the World, Part 1 (1981)
Monty Python and the Holy Grail (1975)

Wouldn't you like to hear the Voice of the Lord? A young minister was being interviewed by a church board for the position of pastor. One, old, hard-working Irishman who was on the board looked at the young man sternly and asked, "Young man, did God send you here?" He replied, "Well, I don't know if God sent me here. I am here trying to find the will of God and find out if you would like me for your next pastor." The board member replied, "Young man, did God send you here?" The young minister was somewhat at a loss for words and came back again, "Well, I just stopped by to talk with the board." The board member interrupted again, "Young man, did God send you here?" Finally, he got up his courage and said, "Well, I guess God didn't send me here. I just stopped by to see about whether we could get together." The old board member leaned back in his seat and said, "That's good. The last four said that God had sent them, and we have had nothing but trouble with all four of them." So, who was listening to the Voice of the Lord? Anyone?

I got this add in the mail: "Discover ten secrets to receiving divine guidance." You know the VOICE OF THE LORD can be extremely useful, particularly if you're a pastor or a politician. You can say: Vote for me or give me more money, BECAUSE God says so." BUT if God didn't say so, that's called "Taking the Lord's name in vain." It has nothing to do with vocabulary words and everything to do with using the phrase "God says" for your own vain purposes. It's false prophecy, and in Deut. 13:5, it's punishable by death. AND YET if God Did tell you to say something to someone, you'd better do it! As God said to Ezekiel, "If I tell you to warn them and you don't warn them, their blood will be required of you."^{xi} Or, like Jonah, If he tells you to speak and you don't speak, you might get swallowed by a whale and barfed up on a beach in Syria. So, hearing God's voice is terribly important, but can be profoundly stressful.

One day, when my son Coleman was a toddler, I told him that Jesus was inside of him. So, Coleman started talking to Jesus. When he didn't hear anything back, he put his fingers in his ears, and started yelling: "Jesus, I can't hear you! Where are you? Jesus, I can't hear you! I can't hear you!" I've read the books, taken the classes, and still stand there with my fingers in my ears, yelling, "I can't hear you! Where are you?" I'm supposed to preach God's Word. It would be useful to hear God's Word.

For years, I used to pray, "God, I can't seem to hear your voice. So, if I'm out of your will, would you please just break my arms?" Years ago, at a pastor's lunch in downtown Denver, I sat next to an Old

Pentecostal pastor. And in the course of our conversation, I asked him: "How do you hear God? I'm not very sure that I do." He looked at me and said, "Well now, that's a very strange thing to say... For in John Chapter 10, Jesus says, 'My sheep hear My voice'." And JUST THEN, someone called the meeting to order. So, for the entire lunch and long after, I worried: "What if I'm not a sheep?" In John 10, Jesus is talking to the Pharisees, having just healed the man born blind man, in chapter 9.

John 9:41-10:4:

“Jesus said to the [Pharisees], “If you were blind (if you saw that you didn’t see), you would have no guilt [*hamartia*: sin], but now that you say we see, your guilt [*hamartia*: sin] remains. ¹ “Truly, truly, I say to you, he who does not enter the sheepfold [*aule*: courtyard, enclosure] by the door [*thura*] but climbs in by another way, that man is a thief and a robber. ² But he who enters by the door [*thura*] is the shepherd of the sheep. ³ To him the gatekeeper [*thuroros*: door keeper] opens. The sheep hear his voice, and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. ⁴ When he has brought out all his own, he goes before them, and the sheep follow him, for they know his voice.

You can see why that would stress me out: If I don't hear, I'm not one of his sheep, because his sheep hear his voice. But in all of Scripture, Jesus doesn't tell any of us how the sheep hear the voice of the Shepherd. He just tells us that they do. He didn't say, "The Sheep ought to hear the voice..." just that "they do." So, am I one of his sheep? Acts 2:21, "Whoever calls on the name of the Lord will be saved." 1 Corinthians 12:3, "No one can say 'Jesus is Lord,' except in the Holy Spirit." John 6:44, "No one can come to me," says Jesus, "unless the Father who sent me draws him..."



I love this Far Side Cartoon. What we say to dogs: “Okay Ginger! I’ve had it! You stay out of the garbage.” What they hear: “Blah Blah, Ginger, Blah Blah” A sheep must hear, “Blah Blah Blah, Fluffy, Blah Blah.” Maybe I hear, “Blah Blah Blah, Peter, Blah Blah.” When we led a tour of Israel years ago, we saw this all over the Judean hillsides. Shepherd boys would be walking and talking with twenty or thirty sheep just following behind—The sheep just wanted to be wherever The Voice was. Each Shepherd would have a flock of sheep behind, but in front of them they’d have a group of goats that they would be driving with goads. Do you remember what Jesus said to Paul on The Road to Damascus? He said, “Saul, Saul, it’s hard to kick against the goads.” It sounds like, St. Paul, the Pharisee, was once upon a time, a goat. So, the sheep follow the Shepherd but not a stranger and the

Shepherd calls each of them by name, each one a different name. So, Jesus called you and he called me, and where did we hear him speaking? Maybe on a camping trip under the stars, maybe through a friend that loved us well, maybe through Scripture, or maybe through a miraculous sign. God speaks in all those ways: Creation, People, Scripture, and Signs. Remember what John wrote in Chapter One: 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 anything made that was made. In him was life, and the life was the light of men.

[Peter grabs a box labeled “Universe.”] So, imagine that this box is the Universe and I’m God. I’ve got the whole world in my hands; I’ve got the whole world in my hands. If I speak into the box everything moves. When we preached through John three, I told you how I was shocked to discover that my newborn, when he was born knew my voice, and his name. The moment, I said “Skooter,” He stopped crying. Every day of his life in that womb world he had heard my voice. And yet I wasn’t a thing in that world. I couldn’t be explained by that world. AND I asked you if there were things in this world that couldn’t be explained by this world—things like Logic, Light, Truth, Beauty, Goodness and Life. You know God doesn’t simply exist; God is existence. His name is “I am.” And his Voice is his Word who is Logic, Light, Truth, Beauty, Goodness & Life. So maybe, like me, you remember a night camping as a kid, staring up at the Milky Way, wondering about existence and what Truth, Beauty, Goodness & Life ARE and it seemed like God was calling your name AND I bet he was. God Speaks through all creation.

Video clip: *Bird Steals Rabbit as Soon as It's Released*
UNILAD (2018, February 9, Facebook, www.facebook.com/watch/?v=4440741679282190)
A lady sets a baby rabbit loose that the family nursed back to health. As the rabbit hops away, a hawk descends, grabs it, and carries it off.

Sorry, that’s a little jarring, isn’t it? God speaks through all creation, but there’s not only logos but chaos, not only Light but shadow, not only Truth but lies, not only beauty but corruption. There are other voices and it’s not always easy to sort them out. God speaks through creation; God speaks through people and groups of people—The Shepherd shepherds’ sheep in flocks. I know that God spoke to me through my youth group, my church, and a world of wonderful traditions. But these Pharisees are about to crucify Jesus according to their traditions and understanding of the law. They’ll call for the first truly democratic vote, and the crowd will chant crucify, crucify, crucify; we have no king but Caesar. The popular vote can be profoundly wrong.

God speaks through Creation, through Groups of people, and through Scripture. At the very least, the Bible is this miraculous record of the best thoughts about God that most people have had for four thousand years. And miraculously, it’s not flattering to the people that wrote it, and usually not popular at the time it was written. And that we have actual manuscripts dating back to a few hundred years before Jesus, prophesying Jesus, is absolutely astounding. For me, only God, could be the explanation for the Gospels and the Prophets, and the self-deprecating testimony of a nation of slaves, called Israel. In the next paragraph, Jesus will even say that Scripture cannot be broken. And yet he just told the Pharisees in Chapter Five, “You search the Scriptures for you think that in them you have life and it is they that bear witness to me, yet you refuse to come to me that you may have life.”

God speaks through all creation, through tradition, through Scripture, and through signs, wonders, and prophetic utterances. And yet all of that stuff has to be tested and interpreted... by you... a Sheep. 1 Thessalonians 5:19, “Do not quench the Spirit. Do not despise prophecies, but test

everything”—you, a sheep, are commanded to test everything. Sheep are stupid. How do we recognize the voice of the Shepherd? People with prophetic gifts like “words of knowledge” used to really freak me out, for I thought they heard from God, and I didn’t hear from God. But then I discovered that my wife was one of those people, and it wasn’t because she had extra-long quiet times. God just told her stuff and yet, it still had to be tested and interpreted. Many times, she’s quoted bible verses or biblical names that she didn’t even know were in the Scriptures, and I’ll say, “Yeah that’s Zechariah 2:4” or “Yes, the name ‘Melchizedek’ does mean something to me.” At times she heard voices that pretend to be Jesus, but aren’t Jesus, and she counts on me to help her sort them out. You know, when Susan gets “a word of knowledge,” the Voice of the Shepherd isn’t getting bigger, or louder, BUT IN FACT far smaller and quite specific. The Universe is constantly upheld by the Voice of the Lord, and yet that voice can become a single word in my wife’s head, or your head, or even a manger.

The Jews constantly sought signs. And these Pharisees just saw the fifth public sign in the Gospel of John. But these Pharisees don’t want to read the sign. All the signs point to the seventh sign that is the substance... “Destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it up” and he was speaking of his body.” “This is the plan for the fulness of time,” writes Paul in Ephesians 1:10, “To bring all things together united under one head in Christ Jesus our Lord.” I think it’s our awareness of this eternal reality that allows us to read the signs in space and time. In John 1, John describes the creation of everything through the voice of God. And in Revelation 5, John hears all creation worshipping God and His Voice, who is the Lamb on the throne. All creation is alive and singing, animated by the Voice of the Lord.

As I’ve been telling you recently, I think I once saw and heard something similar. It wasn’t long after that lunch with the Pentecostal pastors. In the morning, I heard God audibly so, I know it happens. In the evening, I thought God was literally going to break my arms (it was the day I told him that I was leaving the ministry). Sometimes people will say, “I think God is trying to tell you something.” Well, if God wants to tell you something he is more than able. He held me to the floor, almost broke my arms, and yet revealed that this crazy experience was not the point, but that the point had always been that he was everywhere, all the time, loving me. So, “blah, blah, blah, Peter, Blah, blah, blah” was really “I love you, I love you, I love you, Peter, I love you, I love you.” And then, I just couldn’t stop worshipping.

It’s made me wonder how anyone could ever NOT hear the Voice of the Shepherd. Yet most of my life it seems that I have not I so clearly remember a moment in the Pep Boys Parking lot about 30 years ago: I was lecturing Elizabeth about being kind to her sister as we were walking back to the car. I turned around to see her with her fingers in her ears, singing, “It’s a small world after all; It’s a small world after all, it’s a small, small, world.” The Pharisees wanted a small world; one in which they always maintained control—And the Voice of the Shepherd just didn’t seem to fit.

In Genesis 3:8, after they take the fruit from the tree, Adam and Even hear—literally translated—“The voice of the Lord walking in the cool of the day and they hid themselves from the face of the Lord.” They didn’t want to see or hear the Voice. I think it’s because they didn’t want to know what they’d just done to the Voice—they were ashamed.^{xii} Anyway, I’m one of his sheep. And so, I do hear the voice. And I follow. AND I also haven’t followed, for I haven’t heard, & so haven’t been one of his sheep. At times, I’ve even kicked against the goads! It’s like I’m a sheep and something else. So, how do I discern the Voice of the Shepherd today, and follow? In John 10:1, “Truly, truly, I say to you, he who does not enter the sheepfold [*aule*: courtyard (of the sheep)]. That word *aule* was used to describe the courtyards of the temple. So “the *aule* of the sheep,” describes a sheep pen in the wilderness, as well as a sanctuary or temple for sheep, the garden of Eden for sheep.

John 10:1-10:9:

“Truly, truly, I say to you, he who does not enter the courtyard of the sheep by the door [*thura*] but climbs in by another way, that man is a thief and a robber. ² But he who enters by the door [*thura*] is the shepherd of the sheep. ³ To him ~~the~~ **gatekeeper [*thuroros*: door keeper] opens. The sheep hear his voice, and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. ⁴ When he has brought out all his own, he goes before them, and the sheep follow him, for they know his voice. ⁵ A stranger they will not follow, but they will flee from him, for they do not know the voice of strangers.” ⁶ This figure of speech Jesus used with them, but they did not understand what he was saying to them. ⁷ So Jesus again said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, I am [*ego eimi*] the door of the sheep. ⁸ All who came before me are thieves and robbers. ⁹ I am [*ego eimi*] the door. If anyone enters by me, he will be saved and will go in and out and find pasture.**

All! That means that even the very best of men, Abraham, Moses, and David, were “thieves and robbers.” And if you know their story you know that’s true. Each tried to take the kingdom of heaven with their own willpower, their own violence; they were thieves and robbers. Ironically, they were also Shepherds, and even more ironically, in spite of themselves, the Great Shepherd often spoke through them. ⁸ All who came before me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not listen to them. ⁹ I am the door. If anyone enters by me, he will be saved and will go in and out and find pasture. What does that mean? They will go in and out of where? In a few chapters, Jesus will tell us to “abide” in him, as if he is a Sanctuary in the wilderness that we can enter, and then, from that place live our lives.

John 10:10-11:

The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly. ¹¹ I am the good [*kalos*] shepherd.

THE SEVEN “I AM THE” STATEMENTS

- #1: “*I am the bread of life.*” John 6:35, 41, 48**
- #2: “*I am the light of the World.*” John 8:12, 9:5**
- #3: “*I am the door.*” John 10:7, 9**
- #4: “*I am the good shepherd.*” John 10:11, 14**
- #5: “*I am the resurrection and the life.*” John 11:25**
- #6: “*I am the way, the truth, and the life.*” John 14:6**
- #7: “*I am the true vine.*” John 15:1**

I am the door of the sheep is the third I am statement in John. I am the Good Shepherd is the fourth, so Jesus is implying that he is God and the Shepherd, who in the Old Testament is God. The ancient Israelites were told to pray Psalm 23, “The Lord (Yahweh) is my shepherd I shall not want...” It immediately follows Psalm 22 which begins with this line, “My God my God why have you forsaken

me?” and ends with these lines “all the families of the nations shall worship before you... before him shall bow all who go down to the dust, he has done it.” Next line, Psalm 23:1 “The Lord is my shepherd... he leads me in the right paths... even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death.” And then it contains this line “He has prepared a table before me in the presence of my enemies...” So, the Great Shepherd feeds his sheep with something other than grass. Jesus says, “I am the (the one and the only) the Good [kalos] Shepherd.” In the ancient Greek translation of the Old Testament, Kalos, is used to describe the fruit hanging on the tree in the middle of the garden of Eden. Shepherds would sometimes eat their sheep, but the Great Shepherd feeds his sheep with his own beautiful self—and turns his enemies into friends.

John 10:11-14:

I am the good [kalos: beautiful] shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep ¹² He who is a hired hand and not a shepherd, who does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and flees, and the wolf snatches them and scatters them. ¹³ He flees because he is a hired hand and cares nothing for the sheep. ¹⁴ I am the good, the beautiful [kalos] shepherd.

Jesus is the Shepherd. Jesus is the door of the sheep. So, who’s the door keeper that opens the door, that is also the Shepherd? Wouldn’t that be Our Father? It really wasn’t Pilate, Herod, the Romans or the Jews, that lead Jesus to be crucified in Jerusalem—It was His Shepherd and He is his Lamb. I hope you realize that we enter the New Creation through the wounds of our beautiful Shepherd. He is the Shepherd, the Door, and literally in him we are enfolded.

John 10:14b-16a:

I know my own and my own know me, ¹⁵ just as the Father knows me and I know the Father; and I lay down my life for the sheep. ¹⁶ And I have other sheep that are not of this fold. [aule: courtyard].

Literally “this court.” In Jesus day the temple was divided into courtyards, and the outer court was the court of the nations which, ironically, included the Samaritans—who were actually descendants of the ten northern tribes of Israel. Through Ezekiel God says “I myself will be the shepherd of the sheep... I will seek the lost... I will take the people of Israel from the nations (that’s the ten lost tribes) And I will make them one nation.” That’s one Shepherd and one flock. And that’s not the Israel you hear about on the news; that Israel is made up of the descendant of one tribe Judah—that is the Jews. In Jesus day, the Jews were the remnant of Israel, the one tribe that was left, but most of Israel had literally become the nations of the world. Ezekiel prophecies that the Great Shepherd will bring all of them back.

John 10:16b-17:

I must bring them also, and they will listen to my voice. So there will be one flock, one shepherd (He’s quoting Ezekiel & they know it). ¹⁷ For this reason [dia: by means of, through (this)] the Father loves me, because [hoti: that] I lay down my life [psyche] that [hina: in order that] I may take it up again.

“For this reason,” I think that’s a bad translation for it makes it sound like God the Father didn’t love Jesus the Son until he died on the cross. But God doesn’t Love for a reason because God is Love and God is the reason for everything that’s anything. It’s a bad translation for theological reasons AND because it’s NOT the most literal translation. It should read, “By means of this, or through this, the Father loves me, that I lay down my life in order that I may take it up again.” I think he’s saying, In

this is love, that I lose my life and find it... in all of you. So, the Cross does not make God love Jesus, or anyone. The Cross doesn't make God love; the cross is the Revelation of Love, who is God and who never changes. God was not hating Jesus on the cross.

People will often ask, "Why did Jesus have to die on the cross?" And they'll answer, "To satisfy Justice. You sinned and cannot pay for your sins. So, Jesus paid for your sins. That is, God hated Jesus on the cross, so he wouldn't have to hate you forever in hell." It's called The Penal Substitutionary Theory of the Atonement. It's actually forbidden in Scripture—Deuteronomy 24:16. It's forbidden in Scripture, and it's a complete misunderstanding of "sacrifice" in the Old Testament. Sacrifice was always to be about love. When one person sacrifices in a world that doesn't sacrifice it looks like a naked man nailed to a tree in a garden. When two people sacrifice in a world that doesn't sacrifice it looks like a marriage, may even feel like a honeymoon, and produce some life called babies. When all people sacrifice, when everyone loves, all people are home in the Body of Christ, the Kingdom of God, where no one is sad and all are alive

In the words of CS Lewis and George MacDonald, "When He was crucified He 'did that in the wild weather of His outlying provinces which He had done at home in glory and gladness'. From before the foundation of the world, He surrenders begotten Deity back to begetting Deity in obedience. And as the Son glorifies the Father, so also the Father glorifies the Son."

In other words, on the cross, God the Father was glorifying God the Son, and God the Son was glorifying God the Father, and they were both doing this by loving us—us, who had never loved and had no idea what love is. The Penal Substitutionary Atonement Theory is a late idea in western theology that the early church had never even heard of. Perhaps the oldest atonement theory, if you can even call it a theory, is the recapitulation theory. It's the idea that on the cross the Last Adam, (Jesus), was undoing the sin of the first Adam, (us). BUT not simply undoing it, using it to make us all like himself—actually his very own body—his very own self. And this wasn't Plan B; this was always Plan A: this is how God makes each of us and all of us in his image. "In this is Love" writes John and "God is Love" and we are to be his image. We take his life, and see that he has always given his life, and so we surrender to him as his spirit descends into us and rises in us, such that we freely choose to love as he has always loved us.

God was not hating Jesus on the cross. We were all hating God on the cross BUT God will not stop loving us on the cross until we all join the dance of Divinity called Love. So, Jesus didn't sacrifice, so that you would never have to sacrifice. Jesus loved, so that you would love. That you would pick up your cross and follow So why did Jesus have to die on the cross? He didn't have to die on the cross; he wanted to die cross, because he loves loving us and he wants us to share in his dance of love that is eternal life.

John 10:17-18a:

Through this the Father loves me, that I lay down my life in order that I may take it up again. [We are the life he takes up again, we are the body that the Lord had prepared for him, his bride] ¹⁸ **No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord.**

"I didn't have to; I wanted to," says Jesus. And, "Yes, you took my life, but only because I'd already given my life. I've always fore-given you my life—that is who I am: the Logic of Love."

John 10:18b-27:

I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again. This charge I have received from my Father.”¹⁹ There was again a division among the Jews because of these words.²⁰ Many of them said, “He has a demon, and is insane; why listen to him?” [We have a terrible time understanding love like this. We can’t see it. We can’t hear it. We can’t speak it. We’re deaf, dumb and blind to it]²¹ Others said, “These are not the words of one who is oppressed by a demon. Can a demon open the eyes of the blind?”²² At that time the Feast of Dedication took place at Jerusalem [that’s Hanukkah—celebrating the day that the temple is filled with light]. It was winter,²³ and Jesus was walking in the temple, in the colonnade of Solomon.²⁴ So the Jews gathered around him and said to him, “How long will you keep us in suspense? If you are the Christ, tell us plainly.”²⁵ Jesus answered them, “I told you, and you do not believe. The works that I do in my Father’s name bear witness about me,²⁶ but you do not believe because you (pl.) are not among [ek: of] my sheep.”²⁷ My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me.

You are not of my sheep. Wow, that’s harsh: That’s exactly what used to terrify me: “Maybe I’m not his sheep, because maybe I don’t hear his voice.” And now Jesus says that these guys don’t believe, for they don’t hear, for they are not of his sheep. They must be of their father the devil, like the Jews he was talking to in chapter 8—They’re not of his sheep. We don’t know if that means that they are sheep but lost, maybe in the wrong fold, OR if maybe they’re not even sheep. If they’re lost or in the wrong fold, their only hope is being found. Sheep just don’t find themselves. If they’re not even sheep, they can’t just simply decide to become sheep, that would take a miracle, like a death and a resurrection. Y’all are not of my sheep. And who are Y’all?

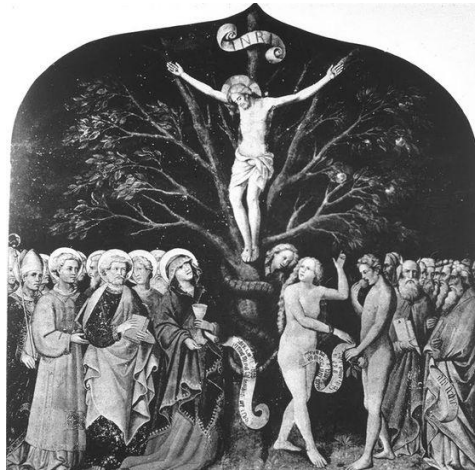
John just told us: verse 24) “The Jews.” AND, who are “The Jews?” Well, everyone in the Gospel of John so far, except the Samaritans. And remember what he said to them “Salvation is from the Jews.” Every commentary I’ve read says, “Well John didn’t really mean ‘the Jews.’” But I think maybe John really meant what he wrote: “The Jews.” Not “some of the Jews” or “the grumpy Jews,” or even “the Jews that reject Jesus,” JUST “The Jews” and YES, John is a Jew. And think about it, The Jews heard the Voice in Creation, the sky proclaims his handiwork, sang the Jews. The Jews, were God’s chosen tribe who together would worship saying, “The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want.” To the Jews belonged the Scriptures that Jesus quoted constantly, and the Jews seemed to entirely misunderstand. To the Jews were given signs, wonders, and prophetic utterance. In fact, Caiaphas, High priest of the Jews, in the next chapter of John will utter the greatest prophecy ever uttered, “one man will die for the nation.” And yet he didn’t have a clue as to what it meant. “The Jews” are the last best human hope for the kingdom of God on earth.

Remember how Isaiah saw the Lord, heard “the whole earth is full of his glory,” and was told to preach? He was to preach Israel down to 1/10th that remained in the land. That 1/10th was the Jews, BUT THEN he’s told to keep preaching until all that’s left is the Stump, which is the root, which is the Holy Seed, Jesus. 500 Years later, Zechariah is told to “Shepherd the flock doomed to slaughter”—that’s Judah, and Judah is the Jews. He’s even told to throw the 30 pieces of silver to the potter; that’s a picture of Judas, which means Jew, betraying Jesus. At the Last Supper, Jesus quotes Zechariah, saying to the twelve, “You will all fall away because of me this night for it is written, ‘I will strike the shepherd and the sheep will be scattered’” Ezekiel even sees “The whole house of Israel (That would include every Jew),” dead in the valley of dry bones.



Gibson, Mel (Director). (2004). *The Passion of the Christ* [Motion picture]. USA: Icon Productions.

Do you see? I think John meant to write “The Jews;” it was the Jews that gathered around Jesus and chanted crucify, crucify, we have no king but Caesar. And then they took his life on the tree in the garden?



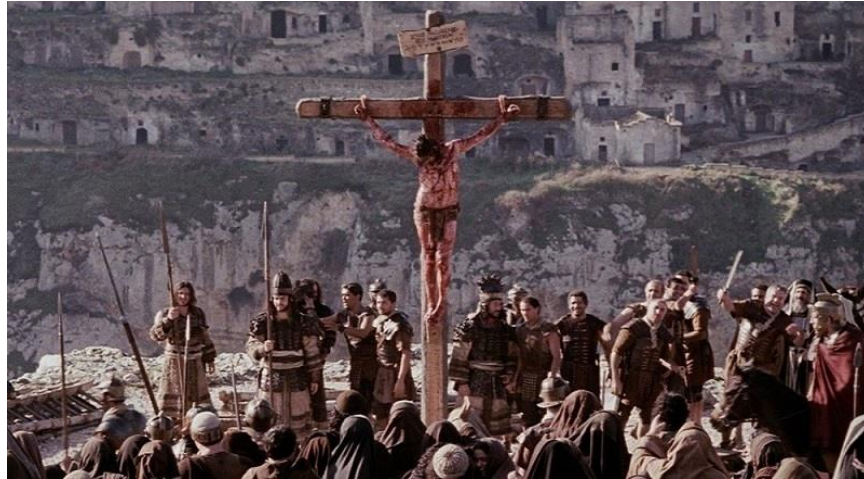
"The Fall and Redemption of Man" by Giovanni da Modena

But don't we all take his life on the tree in the garden?

John 10:27:

My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me.

What Sheep? In John 6, Jesus said “all that the Father gives me will come to me... and whoever comes to me I will never cast out....” In John 12, He'll say “When I am lifted up from the earth, I will draw all people to myself. In John 16, He'll say “All that the Father has is mine” Jesus just quoted Ezekiel chapters 34 through 37 where God says through Ezekiel several times, “There will be one shepherd and one flock.” And it's then in Chapter 37 that God says to Ezekiel “Son of man these bones are the whole house of Israel...” But then God says to Ezekiel, Prophecy to the bones, “Son of man,” and say to them, “You will know that I am the Lord when I open your graves and raise you from your graves, and put my spirit within you, and place you in your own Land.”^{xiii}



Gibson, Mel (Director). (2004). The Passion of the Christ [Motion picture]. USA: Icon Productions.

How does God put his Spirit within us? Well, it's His Spirit that he delivers up on the tree. Isn't it obvious? Each and all have to die with Christ on that tree and then rise with Christ from a tomb that is actually a womb... which I thought was myself. We all have to lose our lives and find them; we all have to learn to love, for each and all of us are the image and likeness of God—WE are the Last Adam, the Body of Jesus Christ our Lord. WE are the seventh sign that is the Substance. WE are the New Jerusalem coming down; WE are the Kingdom of God that is at hand.

John 10:27-29:

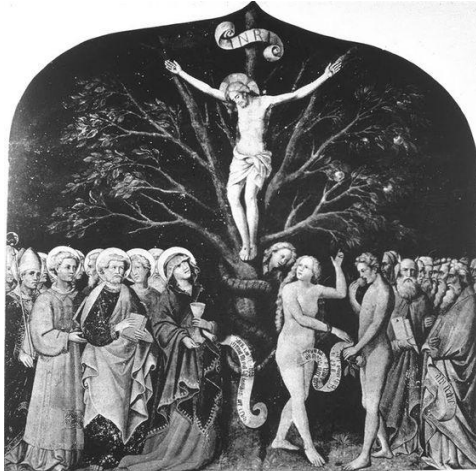
My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. ²⁸ I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand. ²⁹ My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand.

So, his sheep, hear his voice, and follow. Those that don't follow, don't hear his voice for they're not of his sheep. But one day, John five, "The dead will hear the voice of the son of God and those who hear will live." John 10: There will be one shepherd and one flock. And so why is Jesus telling us all of this? That's what's hard about preaching through John, Jesus is hardly ever telling us anything to do, only what God has done and is doing. So why is Jesus telling us all of this? Maybe so that when it happens, we'll be grateful. And maybe it's already happening? If you're grateful for the Love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord, you hear the Voice of the Shepherd, AND don't let anyone tell you different

John 10:30:

"I and the Father are one."

God is Love. Both are Love—one Love. God the Father is Love, and God the Son is the Voice of Love. And both are the Great Shepherd.



"The Fall and Redemption of Man" by Giovanni da Modena

So, take a look at that tree in the Middle of the Garden. Do you see the Good in Flesh hanging on that tree? Do you see the Life hanging on that tree? Listen closely: That's the Voice of God hanging on the tree. If you think you can use the voice of God, to save yourself, create yourself, justify yourself and exalt yourself, you won't be able to hear the Voice of God; for you will have crucified the voice of God on your tree in your garden.

- The Voice of the Shepherd is not a book, or law, or magic word.
- The Voice of the Shepherd is a man that's rising in your heart.
- You may speak in the tongues of men and angels.
- You may memorize every Scripture in the holy book.
- You may be authorized, certified, and ordained by every denomination.
- You may fathom all the secrets of creation.

But until you surrender to the Voice of Love, you won't know what any of it means. And you will be nothing but a noisy gong or a clanging symbol.

Communion

So, on the night that the Voice of the Shepherd was betrayed by all the Sheep, He took bread and broke it saying this is my body given to you. He took the cup and said, this is the covenant in my blood, drink of it, all of you, and do it in remembrance of me.

To come to this table is to confess that you've taken The Voice of God to save yourself, create yourself and redeem yourself. And it is also to confess that The Voice of God has saved you, created you, and redeemed you because He is Your Lord. And so NOW, how do I discern the Voice of the Shepherd from amongst all the other voices?



Well, you know sheep are stupid. That's the point. They can't figure it out, they just recognize the Voice of the one who has loved them, and so want to be wherever He is, doing whatever it is that He does.

Endnotes

ⁱ The next time that he uses this word, he'll say "I know that the Father's Commandment is Eternal Life."

ⁱⁱ Daniel 4:34

ⁱⁱⁱ In Ezekiel 28, The Lord God says to the prince of Tyre "Will you still say 'I am a god' ...though you are but a man... in the hands of those who slay you. To the king of Tyre, "You were in Eden, the garden of God... and I turned you to ashes on the earth..."

^{iv} *The Question of God*, by Dr. Arnold Nicholi, pg. 19

^v 1 Corinthians 8:2-3

^{vi} Romans 1:18

^{vii} John 1:5

^{viii} John Nelson *Julian of Norwich: Journeys into Joy* (New City Press, Hyde Park, NY: 2001) p. 119

^{ix} Basil the Great argued: "Man is nothing less than a creature that has received the order to become god."

^x 1 Corinthians 1:30. RSV: "God chose what is low and despised in the world, even things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are,"²⁹ so that no human being might boast in the presence of God. ³⁰ He is the source of your life in Christ Jesus, whom God made our wisdom, our righteousness and sanctification and redemption; ³¹ therefore, as it is written, "Let him who boasts, boast of the Lord."

^{xi} Ezekiel 3:18-21

^{xii} In Isaiah 6, Isaiah sees the Lord and hears that the whole earth is filled with his glory and, then, is told to *blind Israel* and *make their hearing dull*... Until all that's left is a stump, a tree that's been cut down to its root. And *The Root* is *The Seed*, Who is also *the Voice of the Lord*.

I think it's because the Lord wants us to see that we cannot control the Voice, but the Voice will set us free... on the day *it is finished* and *everything is Good*.

^{xiii} Ezekiel 37:14