

Reformation Fellowship Notes • Spring 2014
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A Case for Biblical Inerrancy
Handout #3

I. Review possible interpretations of the argument Jesus makes in John 10.

A. See Addendum A (page 9).

II. Things to note from the way Jesus presents his argument to his opponents in John 10:

A. Jesus seems to share an assumption with his opponents that there exists a class of writings called “The Scripture” (*he graphe* = “the Writing” / “the Scripture”). [Note that the Latinized form of our translation of *he graphe*, “the Scripture,” simply means “the Writing.”]

1. And Psalm 82 belongs to that class of writings.

B. Jesus seems to share an assumption with his opponents that this class of writings (the Scripture) cannot be “broken” (*luo*).

1. By way of REMINDER, Jesus states to his opponents, “and the Scripture cannot be broken” (literally, the Scripture is not able to be broken).

2. Quite clearly, he is REMINDING them that the Scripture is not able to be “broken”; he is not ARGUING for it.

a) This must be understood to be a reminder of what his opponents already believe, for Jesus shows no evidence that he feels the need to “prove” this claim to his opponents or persuade them to believe this about Scripture. He quite clearly assumes that they already believe it.

C. Jesus seems to share an assumption with his opponents that the class of writings called “Scripture” cannot be mistaken in what they teach.

1. The force of Jesus’ argument is simply this: If Psalm 82 teaches X, then X must be true.

a) This can only make sense if one assumes that everything that is taught by Psalm 82 is true by virtue of the fact that it is taught by Psalm 82.

2. Given how Jesus reminds his opponents in the midst of his argument from Psalm 82 that “the Scripture” cannot be broken, it is reasonable to assume that Jesus assumes the infallibility of Psalm 82 precisely because he assumes the infallibility of a particular class of writings (which he calls “the Scripture”).

a) His reminder does not take the form “This Psalm cannot be broken.” It takes the form “The Scripture cannot be broken.”

3. It is possible that by his aside—namely, “the Scripture cannot be broken”—Jesus is reminding his opponents of exactly this fact: The Scriptures cannot be mistaken; that is, the Scriptures are infallible in what they teach.

- a) But note this: We would legitimately conclude from John 10 that both Jesus and his opponents assume the infallibility of the Scriptures even if the statement, "and The Scripture cannot be broken" were not even there. Why? Because the essence of Jesus' argument takes this form: Psalm 82 (Scripture) teaches X; therefore X is true. Regardless of what it means, the addition, "the Scripture cannot be broken," does underline and accentuate an assumption that is already implicit in his reason for citing Psalm 82—namely, the assumption of biblical inerrancy. Jesus' response to his opponents makes no sense unless we assume the infallibility of Psalm 82 (Scripture), for his argument is that if Psalm 82 says X, then X cannot be denied or gainsaid.
- D. Jesus seems to share an assumption with his opponents that each and every assertion contained in the "Scriptures" cannot be mistaken in what it asserts.
1. The force of Jesus' argument is simply this: If Psalm 82 asserts X, then X must be true.
 - a) Jesus shows no evidence that he feels the need to "prove" that the particular assertion X must be included as part of the infallible teaching of Psalm 82 (as if there existed the possibility that it should not be so included). It is enough for Jesus (and his opponents) that Psalm 82 asserts X.
 - b) This can only make sense if one assumes that everything that is asserted by Psalm 82 is true by virtue of the fact that it is an assertion made within Psalm 82.
 2. Again, given how Jesus reminds his opponents in the midst of his argument from Psalm 82 that "the Scripture" cannot be broken, it is reasonable to assume that Jesus assumes the infallibility of *every* assertion in Psalm 82 precisely because he assumes the infallibility of every assertion contained within a particular class of writings (which he calls "the Scripture").
 3. It is possible that this is precisely what Jesus is reminding his opponents of by his aside, "The Scripture cannot be broken"—namely, the Scriptures cannot be mistaken *with respect to any assertion whatsoever* that is contained within them. In other words, he could be reminding them by his aside that the Scriptures are infallible with respect to each and every assertion that they make.
 - a) But, again, note this: We would conclude from John 10 that both Jesus and his opponents assume the infallibility of each and every assertion contained within the Scriptures even if the statement, "and the Scriptures cannot be broken" were not there. Why? Because the essence of Jesus' argument takes this form: Psalm 82 (Scripture) asserts X; therefore X is true. This argument makes no sense unless we assume the infallibility of each and every assertion made by Psalm 82 (Scripture).
- E. From Jesus' remarks in John 10, therefore, we could conclude that Jesus believed that every assertion contained within the class of writings he called "the Scripture" was necessarily true.

1. Hence, that every assertion contained within the class of writings he called "the Scripture" was infallible and without error (inerrant).
2. Hence, that "the Scripture" ought to be granted ABSOLUTE authority.

III. Objection: There are two other possibilities for what we might conclude from John 10 about Jesus' view of Scripture.

A. First possibility, Proposal A:

1. What if Jesus and his opponents simply shared an *unstated* assumption that there existed a critical distinction between CORE assertions and EXTRANEIOUS assertions?
 - a) Distinction:
 - (1) A CORE assertion is an assertion that makes a necessary contribution to the meaning of a text of Scripture that is of such a nature that it *makes a necessary contribution* to the teaching of that text.
 - (2) An EXTRANEIOUS assertion is an assertion that is such that whatever contribution it makes to the meaning of a text of Scripture, it is of such a nature that it *does not make a necessary contribution* to the teaching of that text.
2. PROPOSAL A: What if Jesus and his opponents assumed the inerrancy of each and every CORE assertion in the Scripture but did not assume the inerrancy of each and every EXTRANEIOUS assertion in the Scripture?

B. Second possibility, Proposal B:

1. What if Jesus and his opponents simply shared an unstated assumption that there existed a critical distinction between RELEVANT assertions and IRRELEVANT assertions?
 - a) Distinction:
 - (1) A RELEVANT assertion is one that makes a discernible contribution to the truth of the scriptural text that includes it such that *the truth of the teaching that includes it is dependent upon the assertion itself being true*. If a RELEVANT assertion happens to be false, then the teaching that contains it thereby becomes false and invalid as well.
 - (2) An IRRELEVANT assertion is one that makes no contribution to the truth of the Scriptural text that includes it such that *the truth of the teaching that includes it is not dependent upon the assertion itself being true*. If an IRRELEVANT assertion happens to be false, the teaching that contains it does not thereby become false and invalid.
2. PROPOSAL B: Is it not possible that Jesus and his opponents assumed the inerrancy of each and every RELEVANT assertion in the Scripture, but they did not assume the inerrancy of each and every IRRELEVANT assertion in the Scripture?

- a) Example: parable of the mustard seed. What if it is false that the mustard seed is the smallest seed? Does that change the truth of what Jesus taught?
- b) Example: healing of the blind men in Jericho. What if the Gospel writer was wrong to say that there were two blind men and not just one? Does that change the truth of what the Gospel writer wants to "teach" us by recounting the event?
3. This is a very clever suggestion. Clearly, the infallibility of the *teaching* of the Scripture is clearly preserved if each and every assertion upon which that teaching depends is infallible. At the same time, the infallibility of the *teaching* of the Scripture is not affected if each and every assertion that is of no consequence to what Scripture teaches is allowed to be fallible.
- C. To answer the above objection and counter these two proposed alternative conclusions about Jesus' view of Scripture, we will need to examine the purpose God might have had for giving us an authoritative Scripture in the first place and, then, to understand the ramifications of that purpose for the nature of scriptural authority.

IV. The purpose of an authoritative Scripture and its implications:

- A. Why did God see fit to give us an absolutely authoritative Scripture? (Or, why might God have seen fit to do that?)
 1. *To give us an "objective" text that can challenge our false beliefs and values and invite us to correct them.*
 - a) 1 Timothy 3:16 would seem to suggest this purpose.
- B. Objection to this assumed purpose for authoritative Scripture:
 1. It is possible to distort the teaching of the Bible. The process of interpreting the meaning of the text is such that human fallibility and rebellion is given plenty of opportunity to distort and alter what one "sees" the text teaching.
 2. Having an absolutely authoritative text, then, does not *prevent* a person from circumventing the "objective" teaching of the Bible, distorting it, and thereby missing the "challenge" that it presents to one's false beliefs and values.
 - a) However, whether one allows it subjectively to be perceived as such or not, it does sit there as an objective challenge to one's false beliefs and values nonetheless.
 - b) Objection: But the meaning of a text is not truly "objective."
 - (1) Answer: This objection misunderstands the nature and competence of language.
 3. But, here is the question: Why would God give us a text that is of such a nature that the *truth* of each assertion is objectively guaranteed, while the *meaning* of each assertion is *not* objectively guaranteed? (That is, the meaning of each

assertion is left to be subjectively determined, and there is no guarantee that the interpreter will get it right?)

- a) Isn't it *pointless* for God to guarantee the *truth* of an assertion when he does not also guarantee that the reader will rightly grasp its *meaning*?
- b) NO! It is not at all pointless.
 - (1) While a human being is left with the possibility of rebelliously and sinfully distorting the meaning of the text and escaping the challenge and correction of its teaching, there nonetheless remains the *objective* challenge to his false beliefs and ideas.
 - (a) The text just does say what the text does say, whether I admit it or not.
 - (b) The teaching just is what the teaching just is, whether I admit it or not.
 - (2) If the Bible did not have absolute authority (if, for example, it only had ordinary authority), then the above would not be true. There would *not* remain an *objective* challenge to my false beliefs and ideas.
 - (a) A text that makes false statements right alongside true statements would put it in my court (in my purview) to decide which is true and which is false. In that event, the whole process (interpretation of meaning as well as the judgment of truth-value) is in my purview. There is no fact or reality beyond me that "fixes" objectively the truth taught in the Bible. Hence, there is no fixed, objective truth that can stand in judgment over me.

C. Critical implication of the above:

1. **Note this important point:** Any view of biblical authority that merges the task of interpreting the meaning of an assertion with the decision of whether that assertion is true (or with whether it has authority) destroys the very value and purpose of having an absolute authority at all.
 - a) God has made interpretation of the meaning of the text open to our subjective rebellion while closing off to us the judgment of whether what it says is true (so that that text can stand against me in judgment of my subjective rebellion). If these become interconnected—that is, if we find the task of determining the truth of an assertion is dependent upon interpreting the meaning of that assertion, then we might as well not have been granted an authoritative text at all, for then the whole process becomes open to our subjective rebellion and we would never face an independent, objective truth that can stand in judgment over our false beliefs.
 - (1) What good does it do me to have a set of absolutely authoritative assertions if, in the final analysis, I must make my own subjective judgment whether an assertion belongs to the class of authoritative assertions?

- (2) If it cannot be known a priori—before I even know what an assertion means—that an assertion is true, then that assertion cannot function as an “objective” truth that stands in judgment over my false beliefs and values.
- b) Thought experiment: Would you pay good money for an electronic truth detector that gave false results 50% of the time. Why not? Because you are no better off than if you had no truth detector at all.
- (1) What good does it do me to have an electronic truth detector if, in the final analysis, I must make my own subjective judgment whether an assertion is true or not? Isn't that the position I was in before I bought my electronic truth-detector?
 - (2) Similarly, to have a text that has absolutely authoritative, inerrant assertions right alongside fallible, errant assertions makes me no better off than if I had never been given any absolutely authoritative, inerrant assertions at all.

V. Answering the above objection / countering the two alternative proposals:

- A. We saw above [see IV.C.] that the whole point of God's granting us a set of infallible assertions is *negated* if our knowing whether an assertion belongs to that set of infallible assertions is dependent upon my subjective interpretation of the meaning of the assertion.
- B. Rejecting Proposal A:
1. One cannot know whether some particular assertion X is a CORE assertion or an EXTRANEIOUS assertion [see III.A.a] apart from making a subjective judgment about the meaning of assertion X.
 2. Therefore, if Proposal A is true, then the whole point of God's granting us the infallible Scriptures is negated. Specifically, it nullifies the set of infallible assertions as an objective standard of judgment.
 3. Proposal A is highly unlikely for two reasons:
 - a) It seems highly improbable that God would grant us a set of infallible assertions in such a way that the whole purpose of granting them is negated and made of no avail.
 - b) If Jesus (and his contemporaries) did embrace Proposal A, it seems highly improbable that Jesus would appeal to the Scriptures in the way that he did, as if they were an objective standard capable of standing in judgment as an objective judge over our false beliefs.
- C. Rejecting Proposal B:
1. One cannot know whether some particular assertion X is a RELEVANT assertion or an IRRELEVANT assertion [see III.B.a] apart from making a subjective judgment about the meaning of assertion X.

2. Therefore, if Proposal B is true, then the whole point of God's granting us the infallible Scriptures is negated. Specifically, it nullifies the set of infallible assertions as an objective standard of judgment.
3. Proposal B is highly unlikely for exactly the same two reasons that Proposal A is unlikely.
 - a) It seems highly improbable that God would grant us a set of infallible assertions in such a way that the whole purpose of granting them is negated and made of no avail.
 - b) If Jesus (and his contemporaries) did embrace Proposal B, it seems highly improbable that Jesus would appeal to the Scriptures in the way that he did, as if they were an objective standard capable of standing in judgment as an objective judge over our false beliefs.
 - (1) Apply to Psalm 82. (See Addendum B, page 12.)

VI. Revisiting Jesus' statement, "the Scripture cannot be broken":

- A. Possible meanings of *luo* in John 10:
 1. See Addendum C (page 15).
- B. The most likely meaning of that statement is that the Scripture cannot be "broken"—that is, "fragmented"—into individual assertions whereby a person accepts one assertion as authoritative and true but rejects another one in the same passage.
 1. In other words, it is not a reminder of Scriptural inerrancy so much as it is a reminder that one cannot exclude any individual assertion contained in the Scriptures from the set of authoritative and inerrant assertions.
 2. One cannot grant absolute authority to the Scriptures, on the one hand, and then disregard individual assertions on the other hand.
- C. This latter interpretation of *luo* (compare with II.C.3) seems more likely than the other interpretation of *luo* suggested up above (see II.D.3).
 1. It is understandable that Jesus might feel the need to remind his opponents that they are not allowed to pick and choose which scriptural assertions they will accept and have regard for and which of them they will disregard.
 2. It is less likely that Jesus would feel the need to remind his opponents that the Scriptures have absolute authority.
 - a) It is less likely that his opponents would be inclined to reject the absolute authority of Scripture than it is that they might be inclined to be selective in which scriptural assertions they give heed to.
- D. Therefore, it is likely that Jesus' statement, "the Scripture cannot be broken," is intended as an explicit reminder to his opponents that no assertion existing in the Scriptures can be disregarded or rejected because each and every one of them, without exception, is necessarily true.

VII. Conclusion:

- A. All things considered, it is most reasonable to conclude from Jesus' interaction with his opponents in John 10 that Jesus and his contemporaries assumed that each and every assertion contained within the class of writings he called "the Scripture" was, without exception, necessarily true.
 - 1. And, therefore, that every assertion contained within the class of writings he called "the Scripture" was infallible and without error (inerrant).
 - 2. And, therefore, that "the Scripture" ought to be granted *absolute* authority.
- B. This conclusion gets reinforced and confirmed when we look at the pattern of how Jesus referenced Scripture throughout the Gospel accounts.
 - 1. Every time he cites Scripture, it would appear that he is arguing that because the Scripture says X, X is true.
 - 2. Such an argument only makes sense if we assume that each and every assertion contained in the Scriptures, without exception, is inerrant and worthy of absolute authority.

ADDENDUM A

Possible Interpretations of John 10:22

	Interp. #1	Interp. #2	Interp. #3	Interp. #4
Claim Jesus made about himself:	Messiah (A)	Messiah (A)	Messiah (A)	God (B)
What Jesus' opponents understood to be the claim Jesus made about himself:	Messiah (A)	God (B)	God (B)	God (B)
The objection made by Jesus' opponents to the claim he had made about himself:	No mortal is Messiah (C).	No man is God (D).	No man is God (D).	No man is God (D).
The rebuttal Jesus makes to his opponents' objection:	My claim is valid because... some mortal is Messiah (E).	My claim is valid because... some man is God (F).	I was not claiming, "I am God," but, if I had, my claim would be valid because... some man is God (F).	My claim is valid because... some man is God (F).
The argument Jesus gives in support of the above rebuttal:	Psalm 82 explicitly says a mortal can be Messiah (G).	Psalm 82 explicitly says a man can be God (H).	Psalm 82 explicitly says a man can be God (H).	Psalm 82 explicitly says a man can be God (H).
The nature and basis for the above argument:	Sincere argument based on an accurate understanding of Psalm 82 (I).	Based on <i>inaccurate</i> understanding of Psalm 82 (J).	Sincere argument based on an accurate understanding of Psalm 82 (I).	Sincere argument based on an accurate understanding of Psalm 82 (I).
The force of the rhetorical question Jesus asks to conclude his argument in support of his rebuttal:	Can't accuse of blasphemy when I say I am "Messiah" while being mortal (K).	Can't accuse of blasphemy when I say I am "God" while being a man (L).	Can't accuse of blasphemy when I say I am "God" while being a man (L).	Can't accuse of blasphemy when I say I am "God" while being a man (L).

- A. I am the human being sent by God to embody God and all that he is—that is, I am the Messiah.
- B. Though I am a human being, yet I just am God himself, possessing the very essence of God in my being.
- C. No ordinary, mortal human being can qualify to be God's Messiah, to be the embodiment of God and all that he is here on earth, in history.
- D. No human being can ever legitimately claim to be God himself—that is, to claim to possess the very essence of God in his being.
- E. An ordinary, mortal human being *can* qualify to be God's Messiah, to be the embodiment of God and all that he is here on earth, in history.
- F. A human being can legitimately claim to be God himself, to possess the very essence of God in his being.
- G. In Psalm 82, God explicitly says that he had granted the title "Son of God" (i.e., "Messiah") to ordinary, mortal human beings.
- H. In Psalm 82, God explicitly says that he had granted the title "God" to human beings.
- I. Jesus' argument for his rebuttal is a sincere argument based on an accurate understanding of the meaning of Psalm 82 and an accurate understanding of its implications.
- J. Jesus' argument for his rebuttal is not a sincere argument; it is not based on an accurate understanding of the meaning of Psalm 82 and on an accurate understanding of its implications. It is strictly an *ad hominem* argument.
- K. In the light of Psalm 82, you have no basis for accusing me of blasphemy when I call myself the Messiah while being an ordinary, mortal human being.
- L. In the light of Psalm 82, you have no basis for accusing me of blasphemy when I call myself God while being a human being.

Critique of the Above Interpretations

Interpretation #1:

- This is, I believe, the correct interpretation. It makes the best sense out of Psalm 82. It makes the best sense out of the objection raised by Jesus' opponents. It makes the best sense out of Jesus' answer to their objection.

Interpretation #2:

- It is unthinkable that Jesus would have done anything so immoral as to make a purely *ad hominem* argument that he himself does not believe is true. Why would I assume that he did?

Interpretation #3:

- It is unlikely that any Jews, when face to face with the obviously human Jesus, would have possibly interpreted his claim ("I and the Father are one") to mean that he "possesses the very essence of God in his being." That concept was not a live option in the time of Jesus. It was a concept that emerged later in the history of Christianity. While modern day Christians might find it a live option, it is highly unlikely (and anachronistic) to think that Jews in the time of Jesus would have found it a live option.
- In view of how the titles "Christ" and "Son of God" are consistently used by Jesus and the apostles in the New Testament (namely, to designate the Messiah), it is highly unlikely that, when Jesus summarizes his opponents' charge of blasphemy as resulting from his claiming to be the "Son of God," he means that they thought he was claiming to possess the very essence of God himself.
- It is highly unlikely that Psalm 82 is teaching or asserting that a human being can be God in the sense of "possessing the very essence of God in his being." Under what interpretation of Psalm 82 would that make sense? Psalm 82 only makes sense when it is understood to have in view Davidic kings who bear the title "Son of God." Who would be in view in Psalm 82 if they are human beings who possess the very essence of God?

Interpretation #4:

- All of the above criticisms of Interpretation #3 also pertain here to Interpretation #4

ADDENDUM B

Psalm 82 on the Assumption of the Proposal B Alternative

I. Proposal B assumption:

- A. Assume that Jesus and his contemporaries believe that only the RELEVANT assertions in Psalm 82 can be held to be absolutely authoritative.
 - 1. Hence, only the RELEVANT assertions in Psalm 82 can be appealed to as an objective standard by which to judge and correct any false beliefs that one might have.
 - 2. In the light of this assumption, Jesus could not merely cite the assertion, "I said, 'you are gods'" from Psalm 82 to challenge and correct his opponents' false belief that the Messiah (the Son of God) must be a super-human being.

II. Argument for why Jesus could not merely cite the assertion:

- A. On the assumption of Proposal B, whether or not Jesus could cite this assertion would depend upon whether or not this particular assertion is a RELEVANT assertion or an IRRELEVANT assertion within Psalm 82.
 - 1. In other words, whether or not he could cite that assertion would depend upon whether or not the truth and validity of the teaching of Psalm 82 is independent of the truth of the assertion that Jesus cites, namely, "I said 'you are gods.'" In the notes that follow, let me refer to the assertion that Jesus' cites, "I said 'you are gods'" as CA (for cited assertion).
- B. Let us consider four different possible ways to understand the teaching of Psalm 82:
 - 1. Teaching Possibility #1:
 - a) Every human being is morally obligated before God to always live in accord with God's standards of righteousness and justice. To fail to do so is an outrage to God.
 - (1) CA could be false, and teaching possibility #1 would still be true and valid.
 - (a) The Psalmist could be simply giving a fictional account of God placing a group of men in a position of governance over his own people Israel on his behalf and then holding them accountable for transgressing his standards of righteousness and justice. The account would serve as a vehicle for expressing God's displeasure when his standards of righteousness and justice (for any and every human being, universally) are violated.
 - (2) If the teaching of Psalm 82 is understood in such a way, it would not be legitimate for Jesus to cite CA from Psalm 82 in the way that he does, for its presence in Psalm 82 could not guarantee that it is a true statement of what God has or has not done, nor of what God has or has not purposed.

2. Teaching Possibility #2:

- a) If a person were to rule over any people group, he would be morally obligated before God to rule in accord with God's standards of righteousness and justice. To fail to do so would be an outrage to God.
 - (1) CA could be false, and teaching possibility #2 would still be true and valid.
 - (a) The Psalmist could be simply giving a fictional account of God placing a group of men in a position of governance over his own people Israel on his behalf and then holding them accountable for transgressing his standards of righteousness and justice. The account would serve as a vehicle for expressing God's displeasure when his standards of righteousness and justice (for any and every human leader, universally) are violated.
 - (2) If the teaching of Psalm 82 is understood in such a way, it would not be legitimate for Jesus to cite CA from Psalm 82 in the way that he does, for its presence in Psalm 82 could not guarantee that it is a true statement of what God has or has not done, nor of what God has or has not purposed.

3. Teaching Possibility #3:

- a) If a person were to rule over God's people Israel as an appointed "Son of God," he would be morally obligated before God to rule in accord with God's standards of righteousness and justice. To fail to do so would be an outrage to God.
- b) CA could be false, and teaching possibility #3 would still be true and valid.
 - (1) The Psalmist could be simply giving a fictional account of God placing a group of men in a position of governance over his own people Israel on his behalf and then holding them accountable for transgressing his standards of righteousness and justice. The account would serve as a vehicle for expressing God's displeasure when his standards of righteousness and justice (binding on any and every leader who might rule over his own people Israel) are violated.
 - (2) If the teaching of Psalm 82 is understood in such a way, it would not be legitimate for Jesus to cite CA from Psalm 82 in the way that he does, for its presence in Psalm 82 could not guarantee that it is a true statement of what God has or has not done, nor of what God has or has not purposed.

4. Teaching Possibility #4:

- a) In the actual purposes of God, particular men in the line of David were appointed by God to rule over God's own people, Israel, as the "Son of God." They were ordinary mortal human beings and, as such, God judged them and dealt with them as ordinary human beings. Nevertheless, God gave

them the title and status of "Son of God." Having been given such a status and role, they were morally obligated before God to rule in accord with God's standards of righteousness and justice. They failed to do so. Their failure to do so was an outrage to God.

(1) CA could NOT be false without making teaching possibility #4 false and invalid.

(a) The Psalmist, as part of what he intends to convey to his readers, is explicitly asserting that God did, in fact, appoint certain men in a position of governance over his own people Israel on his behalf. Those men were ordinary mortal human beings whom he was going to deal with as ordinary, mortal human beings. Accordingly, he held those men accountable for transgressing his standards of righteousness and justice; hence, their failure was an outrage and God promised to condemn them to death for their failure.

(2) If the teaching of Psalm 82 is understood in such a way, it would be absolutely legitimate for Jesus to cite CA from Psalm 82 in the way that he does. Its presence in Psalm 82—since it makes an essential contribution to the truth of the teaching of Psalm 82—would guarantee that it is a true statement of what God has or has not done; for it makes it part of the inerrant, authoritative portion of Psalm 82.

C. Of the four different possibilities for the intended teaching of Psalm 82, only *one* of them construes Psalm 82 in such a way that it would be legitimate for Jesus' to appeal to CA from Psalm 82 as a challenge and corrective to his opponents' false belief that the Messiah (the Son of God) must be a super-human being.

1. Under the other three possibilities mentioned, it would be illegitimate for Jesus to appeal to CA from Psalm 82 as a challenge and corrective to his opponents' false belief that the Messiah (the Son of God) must be a super-human being.

2. Therefore, if Proposal B is the way that Jesus and his contemporaries understand the nature of scriptural authority, then Jesus could not merely cite CA from Psalm 82, and that alone, in order to establish his point (that God has purposed for an ordinary, mortal human being to be the Messiah). In order to establish his point, he would also have to make an argument for taking Psalm 82 as intending to teach teaching possibility #4 above and not as intending to teach possibilities #1, #2, or #3, or some other possibility that does not require CA to be true.

III. Alternate proposals eliminated as possibilities.

A. Since, on the assumption of Proposal B, Jesus could not merely cite the assertion, "I said, 'you are gods'" from Psalm 82 to challenge and correct his opponents' false belief that the Messiah (the Son of God) must be a super-human being, then—in light of the fact that that is exactly what Jesus does in John 10—it follows that Proposal B cannot possibly be the right way to understand Jesus' and his contemporaries' view of scriptural authority.

- B. An exactly analogous argument could be made with respect to the assumption that Jesus and his contemporaries held the other alternative, Proposal A. We would reach exactly the same conclusion: Proposal A cannot possibly be the right way to understand Jesus' and his contemporaries' view of Scriptural authority.

ADDENDUM C

Several Important Meanings of *Luo* in the New Testament

TO FREE

1. **To loose, to untie, to unbind, to free, to release; to loosen the literal, physical bonds that restrain or hold someone or something.**

Matthew 21:2

2. **To loose, to untie, to unbind, to free, to release; to loosen, metaphorically, the metaphorical bonds that restrain or hold someone or something.**

Acts 2:24

3. **To release from a state that a person is in wherein he is constrained in some respect.**

For example, to release from a state of custody, where one is under physical constraint, or to release from a state of marriage (or other personal commitment), where one is under legal, religious, and/or moral constraint.

Acts 22:30

TO BREAK UP

4. **To fragment, to separate into individual pieces, to destroy the integrity of some whole.**

Specifically, to "fragment" or to "break" the Scriptures is to ignore the integrity of the Scriptures with respect to the issue of veracity and authority and to treat each individual scriptural assertion as if it stood alone with regard to its authority and veracity.

In other words, to pick and choose which particular scriptural assertions one wants to believe or accept is to "break" the Scriptures. It is to fail to grant a scriptural assertion authority simply because it is included within the Scriptures.

John 10:35

5. **With respect to an assembly or group of people, to break up; for an assembly of people to cease its assembly as a group and to go their own individual ways.**

Acts 13:43

TO DESTROY

6. To destroy, to dismantle, to ruin by destroying the integrity of some physical object.

To break to pieces, to break up; specifically, to destroy the bonds that hold a physical object together as one object, destroying its integrity as an object, and allowing it to break into pieces or fragments.

Acts 27:41; John 2:19

TO ALLOW

7. To allow; to judge an action, attitude, or attribute acceptable.

More precisely, to find some action, attitude, or attribute compatible with a person's being qualified to be someone or to be qualified for something.

In particular, to find an action, attitude, or attribute compatible with a person's being qualified to enter the Kingdom of God and qualified to attain eternal Life.

Matthew 16:19

8. To permit, to allow, to find acceptable.

For a rabbi to "loose" an action or a behavior meant that, according to his interpretation of the Torah, that action or behavior was permitted by the Torah; for a rabbi to "bind" an action or a behavior meant that, according to his interpretation of the Torah, that action or behavior was forbidden by the Torah.

This is an idiom used with rabbinic culture.

TO NULLIFY

To annul, abrogate, or nullify; specifically, to release from an obligation that is explicitly contained within or is implied by some teaching or commandment.

Specifically, to contradict or nullify what the Torah teaches.

Matthew 5:19

TO DISOBEY

9. To disregard, disobey, break, or contravene a command or instruction that is found in the Torah.

John 7:23