

The Council of Gods (and Your Super Power)

Psalm 82

The Psalms (no. 16 in the series)

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Peter Hiatt

Video and audio versions available online:

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Transcript document prepared by: Michael Hanna (themichaelhanna@thesanctuarydowntown.org)

This document was prepared by Michael Hanna using Peter's notes and the video version of this sermon. If you encounter any significant discrepancies or errors in this document, please let Michael know. Thank you!

Prayer

Lord Jesus you said, “you will love the Lord your God with all your heart, mind, soul, and strength, and you will love your neighbor as yourself.” You said it, Jesus, and you don’t lie. You are the Truth. So thank you. Because that’s not a threat, that’s a promise. Thank you that you will do it in us. And I pray that you will have your way in us this morning and cause us to preach. Jesus you know because we’ve been talking about this. This morning I feel like I’m walking through a minefield. So, if you want to kill me, that’s fine, Jesus. But I pray that you would help us to believe what your word says, what scripture says. And I pray that your spirit would guard us from deception. Thank you, Lord Jesus that you’re not worried. You’ve already conquered all things. So I pray that you’d help us to believe it. In your name, amen.

Message

Today we’re looking at one of the most shocking chapters in all the Bible... So, before we begin, I want to remind you that I didn’t write it, and that it’s illegal to stone people for blasphemy in the city and county of Denver.

Psalm 82, from the Hymnbook of Israel

Psalm 82

A Psalm of Asaph.

- ¹ **God [elohim-plural of el] has taken his place in the divine council [“the el council”];
in the midst of the gods [elohim—plural of el] he holds judgment:**

Literally:

“Elohim has taken his place in the el council; in the midst of Elohim, Elohim holds judgment.”

or:

“God has taken his place in the god council; in the midst of the gods God holds judgment.”

That's pretty crazy, confusing, and blasphemous all at once:

First, it's weird that God is in the plural, but that happens all over the Old Testament... and it almost always gets translated in the singular. Scholars call it a plural of fullness or majesty.

And yet right here we see that it also can refer to a council or group of gods. A group of gods, yet God is one.

Deuteronomy 6:4 "Hear O Israel the Lord [Yahweh] our God [Elohim]; the Lord [Yahweh] is one." Literally that can literally be translated "*Hear O Israel the Lord our gods; the Lord is one.*"

So just the word *elohim* is nuts, but the fact that *elohim* judges in the midst of *Elohim*, is even nuttier... but not unprecedented in Scripture.ⁱ It appears that God has a council of gods, and no one seems to know who they are. Scholars debate this incessantly: pagan deities, angels, kings and rulers... they don't know. Some think that the council of gods must be something like this:

Video Clip from *South Park*, Season 5 Episode 3: "Super Best Friends"
South Park Studios (2001)

Stan and Jesus enter a futuristic facility.

Jesus: Alright, Stanley. You can open your eyes now. This is the hall of the super best friends, Stanley, the headquarters for those who stand for what's right.

Mohammed: Jesus, we've been working hard since we got your distress call!

Loa Tse: Who the kid?

Jesus: Stanley, I want you to meet some of the super best friends : Buddha, with the powers of invisibility; Mohammed, the Muslim prophet with the powers of flame; Krishna, the Hindu deity; Joseph Smith, the Mormon prophet; Lao Tse, the founder of Taoism; and Sea-Man, with the ability to breathe underwater and link mentally with fish.

Stan: So you mean to tell me that even though people fight and argue over different religions, you guys are all actually friends?

Mohammed: More than friends, young boy, we are super best friends, with the desire to fight for justice.

Joseph Smith: We all believe in the power of good over evil. Except for Buddha, of course, who doesn't really believe in evil.

Stan: Wow.

That's the "Council of Super Best Friends" on South Park...

- Buddha has the power of invisibility.
- Muhammed the power of flame.
- Joseph Smith can make Ice.
- Krishna, Laozi and the others, also have super-powers
- Sea Man can breathe underwater and link mentally with fish
- In this episode, Jesus has the power of really great carpentry skillsⁱⁱ

They aren't just the same, as evidenced by the fact that they all have different superpowers. If Jesus really had a superpower, what would it be?

Together they fight for justice... together. The Society of Super Best Friends.

But now, you may have noticed that all the scenes showing Muhammed were blacked out—that's done in deference to Moslems that find any depiction of Muhammed offensive. In 2010 South Park removed three episodes that depicted Muhammed and this episode was one of them.ⁱⁱⁱ

It's not just a Moslem sentiment. Most Bibles don't even state the name *Yahweh*. For two thousand years Jews haven't even said the name of *Yahweh*. They reason that they might accidentally take it in vain, and dishonor the Lord. It's a strange custom, considering that the prophet Joel clearly says: "Everyone who calls on the name of *Yahweh* will be saved." And the prophets and psalms tell us to proclaim his name: *Yahweh*.^{iv} It's strange, but we get the reasoning—we don't want to dishonor God.

Moslems say make no image of Muhammed. But before Muhammed, Yahweh said make no image... make no graven image of me. That makes sense to us... We might mess it up, and it might mess us up.

Well some think the Elohim—the gods in Psalm 82—are like pagan gods, and some think they're kings or rulers. In that day earthly kings were viewed as, almost, extensions of the gods. Some think this is a reference to the leaders of Israel: the judges, kings, priests, Sadducees and even, Pharisees.

- 1 **God has taken his place in the divine council;
in the midst of the gods he holds judgment:**
- 2 **"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.**

Whoever the gods are, they appear to have been charged with justice and they're being unjust; charged with doing right, they're doing wrong. And that always seems to be the case, with any group of folks in which the members think they're god or try to be god—they compete.

We all think that winning is the product of others losing. We all think a meaningful "A" depends on another's C, D or F. We're like a locker room full of boys all trying to make the team, each hoping the others will strike out. We're like a buss full of beauty queens, each hoping to win the pageant. We think life is the survival of the fittest.

So why would we rescue the weak, if we think it's the strong that survive? Why would we help the afflicted and destitute, if they are our competitors? Why wouldn't we show partiality to the wicked, if the wicked might help us win? We sure wouldn't want to help the Good—we'd be jealous of the good for the good are closest to God ... and so we'd wish the Good to be bad.

We think life is the survival of the fittest. So, we all compete for life until all of us are dead. We each hog the ball, which destroys the game. We each try to win the beauty pageant, which makes all of us pretty ugly. Religious folks even compete at love, which is profoundly unlovely.

I think my god can beat your god, and in that way, make me more godly. So, of course, I get offended when you disrespect my god. And I'll disrespect your god, to prove my god, and make myself more godly.

Some think the council of gods are pagan gods or bad angels. Some think that the council of gods are kings who identify with bad gods. Some think that the council of gods are kings trying to be God.

Scripture is full of stories of kings that try to be God, like the King of Tyr and the King of Babylon, whom God brings down to *Sheol*; like Nebuchadnezzar and Herod, whom God smites and is then, eaten with worms; like the "little horn" in Daniel, the beast in the Revelation—the antichrist.^v

In the Revelation we discovered that we're all kind of like our own antichrist, that is imitation Christ—our own false creator and false savior. We're each like men, or women, trying to be god.

In fact, that was Satan's temptation: "take from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil and make yourself like God—the image of God." God forbids making images and we each try to make ourselves the image of God... Isn't that ironic? We each construct an image of God in our minds, then try to become that image, then condemn ourselves to hell when we don't... or we do.

We're jealous of God, and so want to be God, and so try to be God, and so make ourselves miserable, forever alone... and the antithesis of God.

God owns everything, but if I own everything, I can never be given anything. I can't know Grace.

God does everything, but if I do everything, I can't do anything with anyone. I'm 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...
- Which means I destroy everyone but me...
- Which means I'm free of everyone but me...
- I'm free, but entirely not free to love... and God is love.

We're men trying to make ourselves gods, and making ourselves wretched.

When you try to be best, you make everyone else worse.

When you seek to be first, you make everyone else last and yourself alone.

When you exalt yourself, you make yourself wretched and lonely as hell... because that is hell.

- 5 They have neither knowledge nor understanding,
they walk about in darkness;
all the foundations of the earth are shaken.**

The whole earth groans as if in travail for these "gods" lack knowledge of the good and so cannot judge justly.

- 6 I said, "You are gods,
sons of the Most High, all of you;**

... all of you.

When did God say that, where did God say that?
Who are these “gods” that God is talking to?
Who are these “sons of the Most High”?
Who are these “sons” and daughters that are to reflect the image of their maker?

Jesus tells us (not on South Park, but in the Bible).

In **John 10:17** talking to “the Jews,” (as John describes them, and John was a Jew), Jesus says, “For this reason the Father loves me, because I lay down my life that I may take it up again. ¹⁸ No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority [I have power, I have “exousia”] to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again...”

In verse 30 he says, “I and the Father are one.”

In that culture, and in most, a son was seen as being of the same substance as His Father—the same blood. Well, Jesus talks as if He and His Father are two persons and one substance (“homoousian” – one substance).

In the early church this relationship was described as perichoresis. It was a word used to describe the relationship between the members of the trinity. It’s the idea that God is not a static thing. He’s not one enormous self-centered person that destroys all other persons, exalting himself. But God is more like a relentless dance of self-sacrificing love.

God is three persons and one substance: God is love. God is not simply a council or a committee meeting; God is an ecstatic dance of self-giving sacrificial love. God is relentless love. God is Elohim. God is One Dance of at least three persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

John 10:³⁰ 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.”

Now that is an utterly fascinating thing to say to Jesus, particularly in the Gospel of John. For John makes it very clear that “the Word was with God and the Word was God... and the Word became flesh and dwelt among us.”^{vi}

Jesus is, literally, God making himself Man. And these Jews were men trying to make themselves God.

They were projecting their motives onto Jesus. And so, they were entirely jealous of Jesus... and soon they will crucify Jesus. They will take his life, the Life of the Good, on a tree in a garden. They were men trying to be God, and they say to Jesus:

“...you, being a man, make yourself God.” ³⁴ Jesus answered them, “Is it not written in your Law [your Scripture], ‘I said, you are gods’?”

(This is Jesus talking, not some bizarre old testament verse.)

³⁵ If he called them gods to whom the word of God came—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 Son of God?’”

I think Jesus just said, “He is God,” and “the gods—R—us.” The Word of God in flesh, just quoted the word of God in Scripture, saying that these Jews were gods, to whom the word of God came. And the Word of God is coming to us right now, quoting Psalm 82, “I said, ‘you are gods, sons of the Most High, all of you.’”

When did God say that?

Psalm 82 says, “I said, ‘you are gods, sons of the Most High, all of you.’”

Well, the only time I can think of is Genesis 1:27

“God created man [literally “the Adam”] in his own image. In the image of God [*elohim*], he created him; male and female he created them.”

At the end of the sixth day God sees everything he had made and “behold it was very good...”^{vii} And Jesus told us that God alone is Good.^{viii}

In God’s eternal seventh day, we truly are God’s image... his sons. If we believed that we were God’s image, God wouldn’t have to command us to make no graven image. And we wouldn’t attempt to make ourselves in his image. If we believed that we were God’s image, Satan couldn’t tempt us to take knowledge of God, to make ourselves in the image and likeness of God. If we believed we were gods and the sons of God, maybe we wouldn’t be jealous of God, and jealous of our neighbors? Maybe we’d judge justly.

**1 Elohim has taken his place in the El council;
in the midst of the Elohim he holds judgment:**

Jesus quotes Psalm 82 in John 10 on the feast of the dedication of the temple. John goes on to teach here, in his epistles, and in the Revelation, that we are his temple, the throne is in our heart, and God wants us to sit on that throne with him, judging angels and all creation.^{ix}

He wants us to sit there with him owning everything together, doing everything together, entirely free as he is free. Free because his judgment of relentless love, has become our judgment of relentless love—relentless love judges from his place on the throne in the sanctuary of our souls, the midst of the divine council, the *elohim*. In John 17 Jesus prays for us saying, “Father... I ask... that they may all be one, just as you father are in me and I in you, that they may also be in us...The glory that you have given me I have given them, that they may be one even as we are one, I in them and you in me, that they may become perfectly one.”^x

God is a dance and He wants you to join him. *Elohim* became flesh to make you *Elohim*. And in some amazing way you already are, for God didn’t say, “you will be gods,” he said, “you are gods.” We are and we become gods is through the Word of God Almighty our Father.

- The Word of God hanging on a tree in a garden.
- The Lamb of God slain from the foundation of the World.
- The Cross of Christ, which stands at the beginning and the end of the ages.

That's a lot to ponder, but whatever the case, Jesus is not a man trying to become God. Jesus is God making himself man, in order that men might be made god.

The Early church had a word for this “theosis,” often translated “deification.”

- St. Iraneaus wrote, “The Word became man and the Son of God son of man: so that man ... might become a Son of God.”^{xi}
- St. Athanasious wrote, “He was made man that we might be made god.”
- Basil the Great argued: “Man is nothing less than a creature that has received the order to become god.”^{xii}
- Thomas Aquinas wrote, “[He] assumed our nature, so that He made man, might make men gods.”
- St Peter writes that we are to become “partakers of the divine nature.”^{xiii}
- St. Paul prays that we'd be filled with all the fulness of God.
- He writes “It's no longer I who live but Christ who lives in me.”^{xiv}
- He tells us that we are Christ's body, not “like his body;” we are his body.

A body is a dance of life, wherein each member bleeds life into the next member; it's not *the survival of the fittest* it's *the sacrifice of the fittest* for all, and the sacrifice of all for each—that's Life: the Dance of Love.

Well at a tree in the Garden the serpent tempted Adam to take the Life of the Good in order to make himself like God. And at the tree in the Garden, God gave the Life of the Good, that we might know that we are the image of God.

At the tree in the Garden Satan tempts us to justify ourselves. And at the tree in the Garden God reveals that we have been justified from the foundation of the world. At the tree in the Garden God creates faith by Grace and it is finished—Adam is finished, humanity is finished, in the image and likeness of God.

At the tree in the garden Adam dies. And at the tree in the garden Adam is made alive. “As in Adam all die, so also in Christ will all be made alive.”^{xv}

Now let's finish our Psalm:

- 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] you shall die,
and fall like any prince.”**
- 8 **Arise, O God [elohim], judge the earth;
for you shall inherit all the nations [goyem: people]!**

Is that not a stunning description of the death and resurrection of Christ?

“[He] who knew no sin,” became sin “that we might become the righteousness of God,”^{xvi} writes Paul. “Have this mind among yourself, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself [*kenosis* in Greek], by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, so

that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”^{xvii}

He humbled himself. He didn’t try to be God, he emptied himself of equality with God, that all might know God and become the image of God.

See Jesus had a superpower and that super-power was humility—the power to lay his life down, the power to lay power down—the power to “lose his life (psyche) and find it.” Jesus had a superpower and that super-power is the revelation of God. Jesus is the perfect image of God,^{xviii} the “exact imprint of his nature.”^{xix}

So, God said “make no images of me,” but he makes an exact image of himself, and it is the exact opposite of what we would make. It is a naked man, beaten almost to death, hanging on a tree in a garden, saying “father forgive them, they know not what they do... they do not know, they do not understand, they do not judge justly.”

And yet, he himself, bleeding his life away, is the manifest judgment. It is the eternal judgment of God.

Islam honors Jesus as a prophet, and most of Judaism does the same. But neither will believe that God would humble himself to the point of death on a tree.

And so, Judaism feels the need to guard the holiness of Yahweh. And Islam feels the need to guard the reputation of Muhammed. But how do Christians guard the reputation of someone who freely gives his life on a tree [Good Friday]—how do you guard that reputation? That is his reputation; that is his holiness; that is his unspeakable glory; that is relentless love; that is his superpower.

The whole world can see it... even on South Park it shines through. In season 11 episode 5, Jesus saves Easter from the church... for the church is hiding the fact that the first pope was a rabbit—Peter the Rabbit. Jesus wanted the Popes to be rabbits, because rabbits can’t talk... make sense?

Well an evil Pope replaces Pope Benedict, endeavors to kill the true descendent of Peter, and locks Jesus in prison with Kyle Broflovski—a Jew.

Video clip from *South Park*, Season 11 Episode 5: “Fantastic Easter Special”
South Park Studios (2007)

Kyle and Jesus are locked together in a prison cell.

Jesus: We'll never get out in time to stop him!
Kyle: Don't you have any superpowers?
Jesus: Not as a mortal. Only in death. Wait. That's it. We have no choice, Kyle. You're going to have to kill me.
Kyle: What?
Jesus: Stab me with this. [brings out a small dagger] If I die I can resurrect outside the bars.
Kyle: N-no way! Do it yourself.
Jesus: Suicide is blasphemy. There's no choice here, Kyle!
Kyle: Dude, you don't understand, I'm a Jew. I have a few hang ups about killing Jesus.

Jesus:	Just make it quick. [kneels down and hands the dagger to Kyle] Through the neck. I'll arise again immediately.
Kyle:	[looks at the dagger in dismay] Don't make me do this.
Jesus:	My son, there is no time! Do it!
Kyle:	Eric Cartman can never know about this.
Jesus:	I understand. And Kyle, happy Easter.
Kyle:	Happy Easter, Jesus. [stabs Jesus in the neck, as ordered]
Jesus:	Awgh! [walks around for a few seconds, groaning and shedding blood here and there. He falls forward and his halo rolls away with a metallic "clink"]
Kyle:	...Jesus?
<i>Back at the platform, Bill continues his speech.</i>	
Bill:	Behold, no longer will Easter be about bunnies and colored eggs! Kill the rabbit! [a cardinal holds Snowball over the cauldron]
Cardinal:	Sorry, little bunny.
Stan:	Snowball! [A bright light appears near one of the obelisks in the center of the piazza, and Jesus' figure appears in the light. The light fades and Jesus is all alone. The crowd oohs and aahs]
Tourist:	Jesus?
Jesus:	Stop! That rabbit is of holy descent!
Bill:	Why won't you go away?!

Why won't he go away?

He won't go away because He is the foundation of reality and the revelation of the uncreated creator, who is an infinite and relentless dance of self-giving sacrificial Love, that reveals himself as "the resurrection and the Life."

He won't go away because he's the Word of God, and He has a superpower: Jesus is the first Adam that didn't try to be God. He didn't try to be God, because he knew that he was God; the beloved son in whom the Father was well pleased; He believed, "*I and the Father are one.*"

Maybe you won't try to be God, if you think you are a god. And Jesus said, "Is it not written in your law, 'I said, you are gods?'" Psalm 82, "You are gods, sons of the Most High, all of you."

That's the Bible! I'm just quoting... But because I don't want to get "smoted" like King Herod, Nebuchadnezzar, the King of Babylon, the King of Tyr, and Satan, let me say that I really don't know exactly how to explain it, and I definitely don't know how to explain it away. So...

It seems that you can consider yourself "a god." But you must never ever think that you can make yourself a god. But you must believe that God has made himself... you... the true you. And now, I need to remind you of your false you.

To "the Jews" in John 10, Jesus quotes Psalm 82 saying, "you are gods." But to "the Jews who believed in him," in John 8, Jesus literally says: "You are of your father the devil... he is a liar and the father of lies."

I think he says these two things to the very same people.

First: You are spawn of the devil... But the devil is not the father of people. The devil is the father of lies—the father of "*false people.*"

The Devil is the Father of your ego... or what I refer to as the ego. Your ego is that thing with which you construct a body of sinful *flesh*. It is the belief that you can take “knowledge of good” from the tree in the garden, consume it, and make yourself good—make yourself God. It is the belief that you can justify yourself. Jesus never justified himself; he was not proud; he had no ego.

I saw a fascinating interview with John Cleese, from Monte Python. He said that they originally wanted to make a movie called “Jesus Christ quest for Glory,” but they soon realized it wasn’t funny... because Jesus had no ego. In other words, he had absolutely no desire to protect his reputation. So instead of making “Jesus Christ quest for glory,” they made “The Life of Brian,” for Brian was an imitation Christ, not the real Christ.

You see it’s good laugh at your ego, cause your ego is a lie, and it is a holy duty to not take it seriously, at all. So...

Firstly, yeah, I think at least some of the time, you’re probably spawn of the devil... a false self, trying to justify yourself, sinking deeper and deeper into lies. BUT

Secondly, you are also a true self, constructed with the breath and blood of God... that self is Christ’s self, given to you, “Christ in you,” Christ who is God.

In Romans, Ephesians, and Colossians Paul calls these two identities the Old Adam and the New Adam, “*created after the likeness of God*” ... already created. We must put off the former, and put on the latter^{xx} Paul tells us to see that the former is crucified, and we must consider ourselves the later—the righteousness of God^{xxi}

As in Adam all die so also in Christ—the last Adam—are all made alive.

You see we can only be one of two things, and usually we are both at the same time... we can only be one of two things, and we have not made, and cannot make, either of those things.

1) You think you made your old man—but your old man is a lie, a vain illusion, a bad dream from which you must awake. Once you wake and expose him to the light, you’ll rejoice in letting him go. In fact, you and Jesus may just laugh him to scorn.^{xxii}

Your old man is nothing but a vain illusion and

2) Your new man is an eternal reality. You can’t make him for he’s already been made in Christ Jesus our Lord. He is hidden in Christ Jesus our Lord; He is part of Christ Jesus our Lord—he or she is a god... a child of God Almighty, I think that means one of the *elohim*.

It’s utterly mind boggling when you see it, but Love in you, Truth in you, Righteousness in you, Beauty in you, Joy, Peace, Patience, Kindness, Goodness and Faith in you is actually Christ in you—the new you. You can’t make that Life; you can only live that Life, because it’s Christ’s life.

You have an old self, and a new eternal self, and you cannot make either self. Once you see that, it gives you your superpower.

See? I think you are a member of the divine council, and your superpower is humility. It's the power to not be offended, the power to forgive, the power to enjoy others, it's the power to lose yourself and find yourself in love.

Humility is not hating yourself; it's the realization that yourself is Christ... and your ego is just an evil dream. It's the realization that you can't make yourself; you can only be yourself, for your self has already been made. Humility is Eternal Security and the power of never being insecure.

If you try to make yourself god, you crucify god on a tree in a garden. But when you see that God, has already made himself you... on a tree in a garden, you join the dance that is the eternal life of God.

If you believe that God has made you in his image, you won't try to make yourself in his image. If you believe you have been justified, you'll stop trying to justify yourself. If you believe that God has made you a god, you won't try to make yourself a god... or be jealous of any other god... you'll stop competing with the other "gods" and begin to join the dance that is Elohim.

You are a member of the body of Christ, that contains all of Christ, and Christ contains all of God. He flows between all his members as a river of life and the life is in the blood.

Life is not the survival of the fittest. Life is the sacrifice of the fittest for all and all for each. Life is *kenosis*—it's losing yourself and finding yourself in Love. God is Love and God is humble...^{xxiii}

Communion

And so, he took bread and broke it saying this is my body given to you. And he took the cup saying this is the covenant in my blood.

We each drink from the same cup. We are vessels, each that contain and channel the Life of Christ. John writes "We are God's children now...what we shall be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears, we shall be like him."^{xxiv} I can't comprehend this, but we shall be like him and he is God.

You can't make yourself better than that, and you can't make yourself worse than that... You can only discover that.

You see each of us are different, but each of us contain the life of God. And when we join the dance, we discover who it is that we truly are.

A little boy was walking across a field with a bat and a ball.

"I'm the greatest hitter in the world" he proclaimed as he threw the ball in the air, took a swing and missed. "Strike one" he yelled.

Then he picked up the ball and declared "I'm the greatest hitter in the world," tossed the ball once again, took a swing and missed. "Strike two" he yelled.

He stopped, examined the ball and the bat. He straightened his hat, tossed the ball in the air, swung and missed. "Strike three! ... Wow!" he exclaimed.

"I'm the greatest... pitcher in the world."

You are each the greatest at something in the world, and that is being you. Only together, do we make the team... the Elohim team. Only together, do we discover who we truly are.

"I said, you are gods, sons of the Most High, all of you."

So why do you compete with each other, envy each other, not care for each other and delight in each other?

Why don't you dance with each other? Why don't you judge justly?

Why don't you believe the gospel, and live?

"I said, you are gods, sons of the Most High, all of you."

Benediction

So, Jesus says to "the Jews who believed in him," "You are of your father the devil." That would be spawn of Satan. And then, quoting Psalm 82, "Did it not say, 'I said, "you are gods, sons of the Most High, all of you"'"?

That means, you're worse than you thought, and infinitely better than you ever imagined... and so is your neighbor.

You have an Old Adam, a False Self, that is comprised of all your evil decisions. And you have a New Adam, a True Self, who is comprised of all of God's Good decisions—His Righteousness.

And that's why coming to worship, and spending time in prayer, and contemplation is so important. In the conscious presence of Christ, the old man is crucified, and the new man is liberated—he rises from the dead, he is your Eternal Life.

All I'm saying is: "Believe the Gospel and live."

Endnotes

ⁱ

Psalm 95:3 says that Yahweh is the great king over the Elohim, translated "all the gods"

In Psalm 89:7 it talks about God (El) having a council of "holy ones."

In Job [1:6 & 2:1] "the sons of god" present themselves to Yahweh and satan is among them...

ⁱⁱ He uses his carpentry skills to build a giant John Wilkes Booth in order to assassinate a giant statue of Abraham Lincoln animated by an evil magician. This was season 5, by season 11 his superpower is evident!

ⁱⁱⁱ The Quran doesn't strictly forbid depictions of Muhammed. But, supposedly, Muhammed didn't want his image portrayed, for fear it would become an idol. Ironically, Moslems who kill people for portraying the prophet engage in a

sort of reverse idolatry—they don't want the prophet dishonored or disrespected so they idolize the absence of all images. And we understand the sentiment...

iv Isaiah 12:4; Psalm 68:5, 105:1

v In Isaiah 14 God tells the Jews that they will taunt the king of Babylon for he said in his heart "I will ascend into heaven" but he goes to Sheol.

In Ezekiel 28 God says to the king of Tyre, "you say, 'I am a god' but you are a man... [so] they shall thrust you down into the pit."

Nebuchadnezzar thought he was a god and went insane for seven periods of time (Daniel 3-4)

In Acts 12 King Herod simply neglected to disagree with some foreigners who referred to him as a god and God smote him and he was eaten by worms.

Remember Daniel talked about a "little horn," that some think is the beast in the Revelation, that is often identified with the anti-christ, which means "imitation Christ" who takes his place on the throne of God in the temple of God—the temple which is a picture of your soul.

vi John 1:1, 14

vii Genesis 1:31

viii Mark 10:18, Luke 18:19, Matthew 19:17

ix Revelation 2:26, 3:21, 1 Corinthians 6:3, Luke 22:30

x John 17:21-23

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

xii George I. Mantzaridis *The Deification of Man* (St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, Crestwood NY: 1984) p. 7

xiii 2 Peter 1:4

xiv Galatians 2:20

xv 1 Corinthians 15:22 (see also: Romans 5:14-19)

xvi 2 Corinthians 5:21

xvii Philippians 2:6-7

xviii 2nd Corinthians 4:4

xix Hebrews 1:3

xx Ephesians 4:22, Colossians 3:9

xxi Romans 6:6-11

xxii Psalm 2:1-4

xxiii "In the eyes of the ego, self-esteem and humility are contradictory. In truth they are one and the same."
- Eckhart Tolle *A New Earth* (Penguin, 2016) p.109

xxiv 1 John 3:2