CHAPTER SEVEN

YOU ARE GODS

Jn 10:34

Texts

Jn 10:34

οὐχ ἐστὶν γεγραμένον ἐν τῷ νόμῳ ὦμὸν ὅτι ἐγώ εἶπα· θεοὶ ἐστε;

Ps 82:6 (LXX B)

ἐγώ εἶπα θεοὶ ἐστε
καὶ υἱὸι ψυχίστου πάντες

Ps 82:6 (MT)

אַזֹּר אָמָרָת אֲלֹהִים אָחָם
בֶּן הַלִּיל כָּלָם

Ps 82:6 (Targ.)

אַזֹּר אָמָרָת וְהָפֵלָא אֲלֹהִים אָחָם
וחַכְּאֵנִי מְרוֹמָא כָּלָם

In response to the Jews who were about to stone him for blasphemy, Jesus quotes from Ps 82:6 with the formula οὐχ ἐστιν γεγραμένον ἐν τῷ νόμῳ οὐμὸν ὅτι. The quotation is found nowhere else in the N. T., nor does the exact formula occur elsewhere. But cf. ἐν τῷ νόμῳ γέγραπται ὅτι (I Cor 14:21); καθὼς γέγραπται ἐν νόμῳ κυρίου ὅτι (Lk 2:23); κατὰ τὸ εἰρημένον ἐν τῷ νόμῳ κυρίου (Lk 2:24); ἐν τῷ νόμῳ τί γέγραπται; (Lk 10:26).

It is hard to understand why Jesus, a Jew, would use the expression "in your law." The words "your law" are characteristic of Gentile speakers when referring to the Jewish law. So by Pilate in Jn 18:31 and by Gallio in Acts 18:15.1) The reading οὐμὸν, omitted in P45 and some other authorities but included in P66, is to be retained as the correct one in light of Jn's whole treatment of Jesus and the law. He definitely

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1) For references to the same usage by Gentiles in Rabbinic literature cf. Dodd, The Interpretation, p. 82 and Schlatter, op. cit., pp. 206 f.
presents Jesus as being outside of or above the Jewish legal system. "The law was given through Moses, grace and truth came through Jesus Christ" (1: 17). In every instance where Jesus himself speaks of the law he speaks of it as given "to you," that is, the Jews (7: 19), or refers to the law as "your law" (8: 17; 10: 34); or "their law" (15: 25). The only possible exception is in 7: 23 where Jesus says, "That the law of Moses may not be broken," without the use of the pronoun. But even these words must be understood as part of the same context in which Jesus definitely sets himself apart from the laws of Moses. In 7: 19 Jesus had just said, "Did not Moses give you the law? Yet none of you does the law." And in 7: 22, "Moses gave you circumcision." So even here Jesus is made to set himself apart from the law, and his expression in 7: 23 in no way creates a different impression.

With the sayings of Jesus about the law contrast those of Philip: "in the law" (1: 45); the Pharisees: "the law" (7: 49); Nicodemus: "our law" (7: 51); the multitude: "the law" (12: 34); the Jews: "We have a law, and by that law" (19: 7). In no passage is the usage the same as that of Jesus except by the Gentile Pilate in 18: 31. Jn Presents Jesus as above or outside of or, perhaps, as replacing the Jewish law.

The word νάμος is used, as in 12: 34 and 15: 25, for Torah in the broadest sense to cover the whole O. T. That this is the meaning is certain by the reference to the passage cited as ἡ γραφὴ in 10: 35: "And the scripture cannot be broken." 1) "Law" is used in the same way in Rom 3: 19 and 1 Cor 14: 21 and frequently in Rabbinic literature.2)

The use of the word διὰ to introduce direct speech is frequent in Jn; cf., for example, 1: 21, 32; 3: 11; 4: 35; 5: 24; 6: 14. But its use as part of a formula to introduce quotations from the O. T. is limited to those from "the law" with the exception of 7: 42. Cf. 8: 17; 10: 34; 15: 25. So also in 1 Cor 14: 21.

There can be no doubt about the exact source of this quotation. It agrees exactly with the Gr. of Ps 82: 6, which is an exact translation of the Heb. except that it does not translate the pronoun זאת apart from its inclusion in the verb. Cf. Is 41: 23.

The context of this quotation, like so many in Jn, is difficult. It has its setting at the Feast of Dedication in Jerusalem (10: 22-39), but vss. 27-30 seem to belong to Jesus’ discourse on the Good Shepherd in

1) Cf. addition in Pσ.
2) For references see Str.-B., 2, pp. 542 f. and cf. Dodd, op. cit., pp. 75-86; Schlatter, op. cit., pp. 243f.