I've given today's message the heading "Jesus is the Big G God".

For many years, there's been a convention, and most Christians stick to it: Whenever we write the word "God", and we're referring to the One True God, we use a capital "G". Not to be confused with when we see the word GOD written in all capitals in the Old Testament, because in that case, the original Hebrew word is **not** Elohim which means "Gods" – it's God's personal Name YHWH…

So, when we refer to the One True God, we use a **capital** "G". When we refer to false gods, we use a little "g". So, when the Bible writes about the gods of Egypt, it uses a little "g", because they're not gods at all. We learn that they are demons, deceiving people into worshipping them as "gods".

Here's a good example:
Deuteronomy 32:15–18 (ESV) and I want you to notice which words have a capital, and which do not.

15 "But Jeshurun (another name for Israel) grew fat, and
kicked;
you grew fat, stout, and sleek;
then he forsook God who made him
and scoffed at the Rock of his salvation.

16 They stirred him to jealousy with strange gods;
with abominations they provoked him to anger.

17 They sacrificed to demons that were not God,

to gods they had never known,
to new gods that had come recently,
whom your fathers had never dreaded.

18 You were unmindful of the Rock that bore you,
and you forgot the God who gave you birth.

Alright, and that's a convention that we continue today. We write a capital G for the One True God, and a little g for false gods, that are really demons…

Now, the Gospel of John is driving it home to us, that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God… And **in** this, John is making it clear, that Jesus is not <u>one son</u> among many; nor is He a little g god – He is the Big G God…

In the introduction to his Gospel, he said: 1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 He was in the beginning with God. 3 All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made.

At the end of Chapter 8, Jesus said: "Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I am."

And they realised that in this statement, Jesus was claiming God's personal Name (YHWH – I AM), for Himself, and so they picked up stones, to cave His head in with them…

In today's reading, He said:

30 I and the Father are one."

In V38, He said: the Father is in me and I am in the Father."
And guess what: They picked up stones to bash His head in again….

Why are they trying to kill Jesus? It's because in their eyes, He's blaspheming – They know very well, that Jesus is claiming to be the Big G God…

Righto, so, let's set the scene.

- Jesus has opened the eyes of the man born blind.
- The Religious Leaders are not happy about this, because He did it on the Sabbath;

- They then tried to kill Jesus because He claimed God's Personal Name for Himself;
- They've decided that anyone who confesses that Jesus is the Christ, gets kicked out of the Synagogue. (They've made their minds up about Jesus);

- The blind man who can now see, believes in Jesus, and worships Jesus, and so the Religious Leaders carry out their threat and kick him out.

- In response to this, Jesus uses a metaphor or an allegory of the Good Shepherd;
- Jesus is the Good Shepherd, because He enters through the door;

- The Religious Leaders are the thieves and the robbers because they do not enter through the door. Jesus is the door and they reject Him.

- And we saw from the Old Testament, that the bad shepherds do what the Religious Leaders had done – Bad shepherds drive people away from God. The Religious Leaders, drove people away from Jesus, and they drove the blind man away from the Synagogue.

- As the Good Shepherd, the sheep recognise the voice of Jesus. They see what He does;
  They hear what He says, and they know that He is from God…

So, all of this has been going on, and it's been brewing now, for a month or so, because we now come to the Feast of Dedication: Jesus is at the temple again; and the Religious Leaders target Him again:

They gathered around him and said to him, "How long will you keep us in suspense? If you are the Christ, tell us plainly."

Now, the thing is, they weren't looking for truth. They wanted to catch Him out, in something He might say, so they could throw the book at Him.…

But, Jesus isn't going to play that game. "I already told you, and you do not believe… The works that I do in my Father's name bear witness about me…

And then He said, "The reason you don't believe, is because you're not my sheep. Those who are my sheep, hear my voice and follow me…"

Last week, we heard Jesus say, I came that they may have life and have it abundantly.
Today, in V28 He tells us more about this abundant life: 28 I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand.

They might've been able to come down hard on the blind man and kick him out of the synagogue, but as far as "eternal life" is concerned, his life is secure in Jesus' hand…

Jesus and The Father, are One. No one is greater than the Father. He is the Big G God. When your faith is in the Lord Jesus Christ, it doesn't matter what persecutions we have to go through, because no one can snatch us out of the Father's hand…

If we continue following Jesus as His faithful disciples, no one can steal eternal life from us.

Anyway, when Jesus said: 30 I and the Father are one.", the Religious Leaders picked up stones again, to stone Him to death… And Jesus says: "You've seen the good works I've done 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, first things first: The world is usually happy for Disciples of Jesus to be doing good deeds (as long as we don't make them feel guilty or inadequate because they're not doing it too). It's not the good we do, that we are criticised for. But, when we proclaim the Lordship of Jesus Christ, and His Gospel of repentance for the forgiveness of sin, that'll get their hackles up.

Because of this, some who claim to be "Christian", head down the social gospel path – do good, but don't tell people what they should believe…

You see, this is the stumbling block of the incarnation… The incarnation, is that the Lord God Almighty (The Big G), became human…

There have been so many heresies, through the whole history of the church, where <u>for</u> <u>some</u> individual, or <u>for</u> <u>some</u> group, the incarnation has become a stumbling block for them. They cannot accept that the Big G God became a human.

- The Jehovah Witnesses don't believe that Jesus was the Big G God. They believe He was one of the angels.
- Those who follow what they call "Progressive Christianity" don't believe that Jesus was the Big G God. In fact, they don't really believe in the Big G God at all.

- Muslims do not believe that Jesus is the Big G God. They believe He was a prophet.
- The Mormons (Church of Jesus Christ and Latter Day Saints) do not believe that Jesus is the Big G God. They believe He came after the Father.

These are all current examples of the many heresies throughout the generations, who are offended by the incarnation – that the Big G God was born in the most humble of circumstances, and laid in a manger.

Righto:
Vv 34-36, and we're going to have to use our minds now, because these verses take a bit of thinking, to wrap our minds around.

The Religious Leaders said that Jesus was blasphemous
because you, being a man, make yourself God."

34 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 — 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'?

Now, at this point, Jesus is referring to Psalm 82.

And, what makes this passage "troublesome", is the way Jesus quotes it, it sounds like, in God's eyes, humans can have the status of God… And there are false teachers today – people like Joyce Myer, who teach this – she teaches that Christians are like little gods…

That's not what Jesus is saying.

When Jesus spoke, it seems like He was making a point from the Jewish understanding of what Psalm 82 meant, and at the same time, saying what is true, from a more literal understanding of Psalm 82.

So, let's read Psalm 82. It's only 8 verses, and I'll give the more literal understanding.

Psalm 82:1–8 (ESV)

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.

6 I said, "You are gods,
sons of the Most High, all of you;
7 nevertheless, <u>like</u> men you shall die,
and fall like any prince."

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

It's a picture of a courtroom scene.
It's a gathering of the little g gods – the principalities & the powers – Satan and his demons – angelic beings that have rebelled against their creator..

In God's Word, false gods are called "gods" (little g gods)… But, the One True God – the Big G God, is not **a** god among many. He takes his place in the divine council. He, is the judge…

And the little g gods, are the ones under judgment. God created the angelic beings, to serve Him, in righteousness and holiness,,, but they have rebelled – they have fallen.

- They are not just;
- They show favour to the wicked;
- Their ways are not God's ways.
  The Lord:

- gives justice to the weak and the fatherless;
- rescues the weak and the needy;
- delivers from the hand of the wicked

And that's what Angels were supposed to do.

Because the principalities and the powers – because the little g gods have not done this, they come under the One True God's divine judgment…

Even though they are spiritual beings, He is going to judge them like men, and like men they will die. If you want to know what that looks like, read Revelation 20, where Satan and his evil minions are defeated by fire from Heaven, and thrown into the lake of fire and sulphur, to be continuously tormented, forever and ever…

That is the fate of every human who rejects Jesus, and it is the fate of the principalities and powers who turned away from God. It is one and the same.

Anyway, the picture of Psalm 82, is a picture of what the Big G God values, and of what He does…

Jesus' point: False gods (demonic gods) will get their judgment from God. The injustice and the evil that they do, betrays the evil that they are…

Jesus however, **is** doing the works of the Father. Jesus has been <u>consecrated</u> by the Father (made holy / set apart by the Father). He has been <u>sent</u> by the Father. And by His very nature, He demonstrates that He is the Son of God….

Now, having said this, back in Jesus' day, the Religious Leaders had a different interpretation of what Psalm 82 meant. And Jesus' answer, is designed to use their own interpretation, to counteract their judgment of Him.

According to the Jewish Midrash (which explained the Scriptures back in the day), Psalm 82 was referring to the judges and the kings of Israel. They were appointed by God, to do the work of God of righteous judgment… And because they were appointed to do the work of God, they are referred to as "gods". Because God has given them His Law, and they knew good from evil, they were referred to as "gods"…

And Jesus is saying, "Even by your own interpretation, how can you say that I'm blaspheming?" They were evil, and yet you say "They were gods". I am doing the works of My Father. How can you accuse me of blaspheming,' because I said, 'I am the Son of God'?

Either way – whether we go with the Midrash's distorted interpretation, or whether we stick with the plain meaning of Psalm 82, His point is the same:

37 If I am not doing the works of my Father, then do not believe me;

But if I am, then stop disbelieving.

The whole purpose of the miracles of Jesus, was so that the People of Israel would recognise Jesus for who He is – The

Big G God. believe the works, Jesus said, that you may know and understand that the Father is in me and I am in the Father."

Once again, the words of Jesus divided them. The Religious Leaders tried to arrest him, but Jesus evaded capture – He was in control of His own fate…

So, Jesus headed out over the other side of the Jordan – out into the wilderness, and many came to Him. Alright: The Religious Leaders are trying to arrest Him, butmany came to Him, and many believed in Him.

Who is Jesus?

Some see Him as:

- a teacher;
- a guru;
- some kind of a life-coach;

- social justice crusader;
- nice man;
- Himself, a victim of injustice;

- inter-generational con-man;
- mythological figure used by political figures to control/manipulate people who can't think for themselves;
- figment of imagination…

All these responses are a rebellion against the fact, that Jesus is the Big G God, incarnated as a human being — a man, and yet The One True God, who died at the hands of His creation, that we might have eternal life…

Why do so many deny the incarnation of the One True God?

You see, if it is true that:

- Jesus is the Christ;
  And it is.
- Jesus is God incarnate as man;
  And it is.
- Jesus died as the atonement for our sins;
  and it is.

- Jesus rose from the dead;
  and it is.
- Jesus is returning to judge the living and the dead;
  and it is.
- Jesus gives eternal life to all those who believe in His Name;
  and it is…

If Jesus Christ is the Big G God, and we believe this, that changes everything…

Why do we Christians live so differently to everybody else in the world?
Because Jesus is God.

Why are we so exclusive and don't mix in with other religions?
Because they are demonic and Jesus is God.

Why do we Christians have such joy, and hold fast to our faith, even when persecuted for it?
Because the Lord Jesus and the Father are one.

We believe in the Holy Trinity, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

Sometime in the early 300's (320's), a bloke by the name of "Arius" brought a false teaching into the Christian church. And Arianism seems like it was very devoted to Jesus. It spoke of the Father; the Son; and the Holy Spirit, but it denied that Jesus is the One True God.

That corruption, could not be allowed to pervert the Gospel. So, the leaders in the Christian church at the time, met at the council of Nicaea (in the year 325AD). And there, they wrote what has become known as the Nicene Creed. It is a statement of belief, which guards a correct understanding of the eternal divinity of The Lord Jesus Christ.

It's a creed that is meant to be said together, and we're going to do that now.

And I want you to notice, it's not "I believe". It's "We believe"… We live in a generation that like to say "Well, I believe…" But as Christians – as Disciples of Jesus, we have:

- a common faith;

- a common belief;
- one Lord and Master

The One Eternal God: Father, Son & Spirit, but one God.

Let's proclaim together, what we believe:

The Nicene Creed

We believe in one God,
the Father, the Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all that is, seen and unseen.

We believe in the Lord, Jesus Christ,
the only Son of God,
eternally begotten of the Father,
God from God, Light from Light,

true God from true God,
begotten not made,
of one Being with the Father;
through Him all things were made.

For us and for our salvation
He came down from heaven,
was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary
and became truly human.

For our sake He was crucified under Pontius Pilate;
he suffered death and was buried.

On the third day He rose again
in accordance with the Scriptures;

He ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.

He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead,
and His kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit,
the Lord, the giver of life,

Who proceeds from the Father,
Who with the Father and the Son
is worshipped and glorified,
Who has spoken through the prophets.

We believe in one holy catholic
and apostolic Church.
We acknowledge one baptism
for the forgiveness of sins.

We look for the resurrection of the dead,
and the life of the world to come.

Amen.