

Brief on The Word Gods¹

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The word “gods” is most often used in the evil sense to mean false gods. However, the word “gods” is also used in the good sense to mean rulers or to mean men who are pleasing to God and thus said to be god-like or sons of God or children of God. For example,

God called Moses a god to mean a ruler of Pharaoh:

“And the Lord said to Moses: Behold I have appointed thee the god of Pharaoh, and Aaron thy brother shall be thy prophet.” (Ex. 7:1)

And the word “gods” in the following verses mean men who are pleasing to God who are also called sons of God because they are like God:

“God hath stood in the congregation of gods; and being in the midst of them, he judgeth gods...I have said: You are gods and all of you the sons of the most High.” (Ps. 81:1, 6)

Jesus says, “If he called them gods to whom the word of God was spoken and the scripture cannot be broken; Do you say of him whom the Father hath sanctified and sent into the world: Thou blasphemest, because I said, I am the Son of God?” (Jn. 10:34-36)

“But as many as received him, he gave them power to be made the sons of God, to them that believe in his name. (Jn. 1:12)

“Being justified therefore by faith, let us have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom also we have access through faith into this grace wherein we stand and glory in the hope of the glory of the sons of God.” (Rom. 5:1-2)

But Christ is the Son of God by birth and nature whereas as mere men can become sons of God only by grace and adoption. Hence when some of the Church Fathers said that “God became man so that man may become god or become gods,” they mean that men can become like God and thus become sons of God by grace and adoption but not by birth and nature. For example,

St. Athanasius, *On the Incarnation*, 4th century: “For he [Jesus] was made man that we might be made god (or become gods).” (54, 3)

St. Augustine, *Exposition on the Psalms*, Psalm 50: “2. ...Another Psalm [Ps. 81:1] saith, ‘God hath stood in the synagogue of gods, but in the midst he judgeth gods.’ ...It is evident, then, that he hath called men gods that are deified of his grace not born of his substance... See in the same Psalm those to whom he saith, ‘I have said, ‘Ye are gods, and children of the Highest all; but ye shall die like men, and fall like one of the princes.’ It is evident then, that he hath called men gods that are deified of his grace, not born of his substance.”

For the glory of God; in honor of the Blessed Virgin Mary, St. Michael, St. Joseph, Ss. Joachim and Anne, St. John the Baptist, the other angels and saints; and for the salvation of men

Original version: 6/2022; Current version: 6/2022

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¹ RJMI’s Briefs are Long Commentaries contained in the end of *The Catholic Bible*, revised by RJMI.