

## 40. The Gospel of John—5:16-18

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### *“Jesus Declares His Divinity” Pt.2*

(8/19/18)

We are currently in chapter 5 in our study of John’s gospel—in a series we’ve entitled, *“Jesus Declares His Divinity.”*

Now, as we said last time, the discourse Jesus gives here starting with verse 17 and running thru the end of the chapter—was the result of the miracle He did as recorded in verses 1-15.

This follows a pattern established by Jesus thru out His earthly ministry—a miracle followed by a discourse, leading up to one of the seven “I AM” statements (declarations of divinity) that John chose to build his gospel around.

Jesus uses *this* occasion to declare His oneness and equality with the Father—that He is the great “I AM”.

This is no inconsequential truth—our eternal destiny hangs in the balance when it comes to our understanding of Who Jesus is—as He Himself said:

**John 8:24 (NKJV)**

<sup>24</sup> Therefore I said to you that you will die in your sins; for if you do not believe that I am *He*, you will die in your sins."

Our Christian faith is built—not on principles, but on a Person—the Person and work of Jesus Christ.

This makes Christianity unique among the other religions of the world.

You can remove Mohammed from Islam, Buddha from Buddhism, Confucius from Confucianism and nothing would change, because those religions aren't built on their leaders—on their teachings, but not on them personally.

But remove Jesus Christ from Christianity and it ceases to exist—because Christianity is inextricably linked to and built upon the Person and work of Jesus Christ!

As we said last time, the subject of Who Jesus is (God or just a man) is still being debated by skeptics and liberals alike—who often don't bother to seriously consider what Jesus said about Himself on the subject.

And since, as we just said, understanding Who Jesus is, is not only foundational to the Christian faith—it is the difference between eternal life in heaven and eternal destruction in hell—we must know and believe unequivocally who Jesus Christ is!

In John chapter 5 verses 17 thru 30—Jesus makes 5 claims to His own divinity, 5 claims to equality with the Father (God).

#### **I. Equality with God in His Person—v.17-18**

#### **II. Equality with God in His Work—v.17, 19-20**

#### **III. Equality with God in His Power Over Life and Death—v.21**

#### **IV. Equality with God in His Authority to Judge—v.22**

#### **V. Equality with God in Honor—v.23**

Now before we go any further let me say that some messages we give are very practical, some are inspirational or devotional—this series will be more theological in content.

Please understand—sound doctrine is the gateway to true devotion.

Some people come to church to hear inspirational messages that make them feel kind of ‘warm and fuzzy’ in their relationship with God.

Others hope to hear practical messages on getting out of debt or about building a healthy marriage.

But in reality, unless they get past the first hurdle—understanding Who Jesus Christ is and then receiving Him and submitting to Him as their Lord and Savior—everything else will be useless to them.

You see, many Christians think they have a money problem and so they come to church looking for practical principles on how to get out of debt not realizing that—they don’t have a money problem—they have a Lordship problem!

And the same is true with Christian husbands and wives who come to church looking to learn principles on how to resolve conflicts in their marriage and yet don’t realize that—they don’t have a marriage problem—they have a Lordship problem.

We could apply this to every issue and problem in our Christian life (you can fill in the blank)—you don’t have a \_\_\_\_ problem—you have a Lordship problem.

And when I say that many Christians have a ‘Lordship’ problem in their relationship with Jesus Christ, what I mean is that many Christians call Jesus *Lord*—but use the word “Lord” as a name and not a title.

The word ‘Lord’ is a title for the person who has control of your life—the one you live to serve and obey.

**Luke 6:46-49 (NLT2)**

<sup>46</sup> “So why do you keep calling me ‘Lord, Lord!’ when you don’t do what I say? <sup>47</sup> I will show you what it’s like when someone comes to me, listens to my teaching, and then follows it. <sup>48</sup> It is like a person building a house who digs deep and lays the foundation on solid rock. When the floodwaters rise and break against the house, it stands firm because it is well built. <sup>49</sup> But anyone who hears and doesn’t obey is like a person who builds a house without a foundation [*on the dirt*]. When the floods sweep down against that house, it will collapse into a heap of ruins.”

The solution to every problem we face as Christians boils down to how we relate to our Lord Jesus Christ—if He’s really our Lord (Master over all of our lives) we will obey everything He has said.

But even that starts with our understanding of Who He is—and not just theologically or theoretically—but actually and practically.

Once again, our Christian faith is built upon the Person and work of Christ—if the foundation is faulty, whatever you try to build on it will eventually crumble and fall—so please listen carefully to the words of Christ in this series.

**I. Equality with God in His Person—v.17-18****John 5:16-18 (NKJV)**

<sup>16</sup> For this reason the Jews persecuted Jesus, and sought to kill Him, because He had done these things on the Sabbath. <sup>17</sup> **But Jesus answered them, "My Father has been working until now, and I have been working."** <sup>18</sup> **Therefore the Jews sought all the more to kill Him, because He not only broke the Sabbath, but also said that God was His Father, making Himself equal with God.**

First of all, what is the big deal? Every one of us as *Christians* refers to God as our Father—in fact Jesus even taught us to pray, “*Our Father Who is in heaven...*”

That’s true, but you have to understand that—the Christian mindset in calling God our Father today is different than was the Jewish mindset in Jesus’ day.

You see, in Jewish culture the mindset was that a son was always equal with his father in personhood—not in authority but in essential humanity.

The Jews viewed themselves collectively as sons of God by creation (that He was their Father in the sense that He gave them life creatively but not relationally)—Jesus (the only begotten Son of God), however, claimed to be God’s Son by nature and in Personhood.

One author put it this way—

“The hostile Jewish authorities clearly understood that Jesus’ use of the title Son of God was a claim to deity. Otherwise, they would not have accused Him of blasphemy (cf. 10:36). In fact, it was Jesus’ claim to be the Son of God that led the Jews to demand His death: *“The Jews answered [Pilate], ‘We have a law, and by that law He ought to die because He made Himself out to be the Son of God’ ”* (19:7). Even while He was on the cross, some mocked Him, sneering, *“He trusts in God; let God rescue Him now, if He delights in Him; for He said, ‘I am the Son of God’ ”* (Matt. 27:43).

All of the above lines of evidence converge on one inescapable point: Jesus Christ claimed absolute equality with God. Thus He could say, *“I and the Father are one”* (10:30); *“He who sees Me sees the One who sent Me”* (12:45); and *“He who has seen Me has seen the Father”* (14:9). Those who would deny that Jesus claimed to be God must deny the historical accuracy and truthfulness of the gospel records and thereby establish themselves as superior sources of truth.”

But let me focus on verse 17 for a second—so that we understand what Jesus is saying:

**John 5:16-17 (NKJV)**

<sup>16</sup> For this reason the Jews persecuted Jesus, and sought to kill Him, because He had done these things on the Sabbath. <sup>17</sup> **But Jesus answered them, "My Father has been working until now, and I have been working."**

So Jesus essentially told these religious leaders—**“Why do I work on the Sabbath?—Because My Father works on the Sabbath.”**

Now it is true that, on the very first Sabbath that followed the original six days of creation, God did rest—

**Genesis 2:1-3 (NKJV)**

<sup>1</sup> Thus the heavens and the earth, and all the host of them, were finished. <sup>2</sup> And on the seventh

day God ended His work which He had done, and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had done. <sup>3</sup> Then God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because in it He rested from all His work which God had created and made.

When it says that God “**rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had done**”—it isn’t implying that God rested because He was tired or weary—

**Isaiah 40:28 (NKJV)**

<sup>28</sup> Have you not known? Have you not heard? The everlasting God, the LORD, The Creator of the ends of the earth, Neither faints nor is weary. His understanding is unsearchable.

I just read an article written by a man who said he was an atheist because he read in Genesis how God created everything in six days and then rested.

He reasoned that—any so-called ‘God’ who worked six days and had to take a ‘nap’ (rest) because He was tired couldn’t be much of a God, and therefore not worthy of believing in, serving or worshipping.

It’s interesting how he seems to have overlooked the part where God created the entire universe in six days with just His word!

The ignorance of some people is breath-taking—God didn’t rest because He was fatigued—He rested because He was finished!

God doesn’t need to rest in the sense of rejuvenating Himself or replenishing His energy because when God works there is no loss or dissipation of energy and therefore He can’t be fatigued thus requiring rest (sleep)—

**Psalms 121:4 (NLT2)**

<sup>4</sup> Indeed, he who watches over Israel never slumbers or sleeps.

The Hebrew word translated “**rested**” in Genesis 2:2 (*shabat*) simply means that He *ceased from His work*.

He had completed all the work of creation that He desired to do, so there was nothing more for Him to create—therefore, He rested from creating.

But really, God never ‘takes a day off’ (Sabbath)—if He did the universe would cease to exist—

**Colossians 1:16-17 (NLT2)**

<sup>16</sup> for through him God created everything in the heavenly realms and on earth. He made the things we can see and the things we can’t see— such as thrones, kingdoms, rulers, and authorities in the unseen world. Everything was created through him and for him. <sup>17</sup> He existed before anything else, and he holds all creation together.

When Paul said that Jesus created all things that would of course include atoms which make up all created things in the physical universe.

And we know that atoms are made up of a nucleus that contains protons (positively charged particles) and neutrons (neutrally charged particles) and orbiting the nucleus of the atom is one or more electrons (negatively charged particles).

Now Coulomb’s Law of Electricity says that like charges repel (you can prove Coulomb’s Law by pushing the positive and negative ends of two magnets toward one another, positive to positive and negative to negative, and feeling them repel each other)—opposite charges attract; like charges repel.

But here’s a great mystery: In the nucleus of the atom—protons (positively charged particles) are all packed together.

Coulomb’s Law says that like charges repel—so what keeps these positive-charged protons from pushing away from each other like the positive ends of a magnet push each other away?

What holds the protons together inside the nucleus of the atom?—scientists don’t know.

Some have postulated what they have called “atomic glue” as to what holds the atom together—but they really don’t know.

But as believers—we know that, as the Bible says, it was Jesus who created all things and holds them together.

Hebrews 1:3 says that He holds it all together “*by the word of His power*”—the same word of His power that brought the universe into existence—holds it together.

However, the Bible says that someday He will let go and no longer hold all the atoms in the universe together—Peter tells us what will happen:

**2 Peter 3:10 (NKJV)**

<sup>10</sup> But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up.

When Peter says the “*elements will melt*” he uses the Greek word ‘luo’ which means “to be loosed”.

An atomic explosion takes place when slow moving neutrons are used to bombard the nucleus of the atom.

When that happens the positively charged protons respond according to their nature and begin to repel one another—the result is the atom is split and an atomic explosion takes place.

They say that the amount of nuclear material that was used in the atomic bomb dropped on Hiroshima was only about the size of a dime—and look at the devastation it caused!

The physical universe is estimated to be 12 billion light years in diameter.



To think that someday Jesus, who is holding all the atoms in the universe together, will let go and there will be a nuclear bomb detonated that is 12 billion light years in diameter—is incredible to think about!

There will suddenly be a “great noise” and the physical universe will instantly be vaporized as everything will dissolve in zillion-degree “fervent heat” and cease to exist.

Folks, the ‘Big Bang’ didn’t happen at the beginning—it happens at the end!

What will happen then you ask?

**Isaiah 65:17 (NKJV)**

<sup>17</sup> "For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth; And the former shall not be remembered or come to mind.

**2 Peter 3:11-13 (NKJV)**

<sup>11</sup> Therefore, since all these things will be dissolved, what manner *of persons* ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, <sup>12</sup> looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be dissolved, being on fire, and the elements will melt with fervent heat? <sup>13</sup> Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.

**And so, getting back to our text this morning**—God rested on that first Sabbath because the work of creation was finished.

However, not long after God finished the original creation (physical universe)—man fell, and God began working on the new creation (work of redemption)—

**2 Corinthians 5:17 (NKJV)**

<sup>17</sup> Therefore, if anyone *is* in Christ, *he is* a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.

The work of the new creation (redemption of man) began in the Garden of Eden as soon as man fell—God took and killed animals and used their skin to cover the shame of man’s nakedness.

The Lord was teaching us that atonement would require a blood sacrifice if man's sin was to be covered (temporarily thru animal sacrifices)—and then later thru Christ (the Lamb of God) taken away completely.

And that, I believe, is what Jesus is essentially referring to when He said, "**My Father has been working until now, and I have been working.**" (v.17)

He was talking about the work of saving souls, the work of redemption—a work that God never rests from doing until it is finished—

**Revelation 21:1-6a (NKJV)**

<sup>1</sup> Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away... <sup>2</sup> Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. <sup>3</sup> And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God *is* with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them *and be* their God. <sup>4</sup> And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away." <sup>5</sup> Then He who sat on the throne said, "Behold, I make all things new." And He said to me, "Write, for these words are true and faithful." <sup>6</sup> And He said to me, "**It is done!**...[the work of redemption]

Now, please understand, when Jesus healed on the Sabbath (or did any miracle)—it was designed to point the Jewish people (and Gentiles) to the fact that He was God incarnate, equal with the Father and Savior of the world—

**John 14:11 (NKJV)**

<sup>11</sup> Believe Me that I *am* in the Father and the Father in Me, or else believe Me for the sake of the works [miracles, healings] themselves.

**Isaiah 35:5-6a (NKJV)**

<sup>5</sup> [When Messiah comes]...Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, And the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. <sup>6</sup> Then the lame shall leap like a deer, And the tongue of the dumb [mute] sing...

When Jesus worked on the Sabbath healing people—it was the work of redemption by showing them that Messiah, the Son of God, was with them and using His miraculous works to prove His divinity and save them—if they would receive Him by faith..

Again, the first point in our outline of this series, ‘**Jesus Declares His Divinity**’ is—“**Jesus declares His equality with God in His Person.**”

And of course, the idea being that—no one can be equal *with God* who is *not God*!

**John 5:18 (NKJV)**

**<sup>18</sup> Therefore the Jews sought all the more to kill Him, because He not only broke the Sabbath, but also said that God was His Father, making Himself equal with God.**

The phrase “**making himself equal with God**” employs a present perfect tense verb in the Greek, which means that—Jesus was *continually* making Himself equal with God.

In other words, this was no isolated incident—it was the hallmark of His ministry.

Regardless of what the Mormons, Jehovah Witnesses, the Way International—or any other group that tells you “*Jesus wasn’t God, He never claimed to be God*”—that is pure heresy, and you can take them to this passage and show them what Jesus actually said on the subject!

The fact is, those who heard Jesus knew He was claiming deity—that’s why they wanted to kill Him.

If they had *misunderstood* what Jesus was claiming about Himself, and therefore picked up stones to kill Him for blasphemy (John 10:32)—He would have immediately corrected them by saying, “*Hold it guys, you misunderstood Me. I’m not claiming to be God!*”

But instead, when the Jewish leaders picked up stones to kill Him, He said to them—

**John 10:32-33 (NKJV)**

<sup>32</sup> ...“Many good works I have shown you from My Father. For which of those works do you stone Me?” <sup>33</sup> The Jews answered Him, saying, “For a good work we do not stone You, but for blasphemy, and because You, being a Man, make Yourself God.”

And again, if He wasn't claiming to be God—He would have immediately set the record straight.

But instead, He agreed with their understanding of Who He was—they had it right, they understood perfectly Who He was claiming to be—God (Second Person of the Trinity) in human form!

If Jesus Christ wasn't Who He claimed to be—He would have been a liar and/or a lunatic—the worst blasphemer that ever lived.

And again, that's why it's so ridiculous to call Him a good teacher if you're not going to accept Who He claimed to be.

Good teachers don't claim to be God—blasphemers do, lunatics do—**and God does**—now take your pick!

If you believe that Jesus is the Son of God (God in human form)—then you had better listen to what He said and do what He told you to do—first believe, then receive and finally *obey*.

I'll leave you with the words of the Lord Jesus Christ—

**Luke 6:46 (NLT2)**

<sup>46</sup> “So why do you keep calling me ‘Lord, Lord!’ when you don’t do what I say?”

Nothing else will be made right, not your marriage or your finances or anything else in your life, until you call Jesus “Lord”—not as a name but as the title of the One who is in control of every area of your life and start to obey everything He has told you to do.