

42. The Gospel of John—5:20-22

“Jesus Declares His Divinity” Pt.4

(9/9/18)

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

When John opened his gospel, he stated clearly and categorically the divinity of Christ—

John 1:1 (NKJV)

¹ In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

But now in chapter 5 he focuses on the testimony of Jesus *Himself* declaring His own divinity.

This is pivotal in that, starting right here, the persecution against Jesus by His enemies begins to escalate exponentially—and most of it was the result of Him going around claiming to be the Son of God and therefore equal with God.

And as we said last time—no one can be equal *with God* who is *not God*!

The phrase “**making himself equal with God**” (v.18) in the Greek is declaring that Jesus was *continually* making Himself equal with God—in other words, this was no isolated incident, it was the hallmark of His ministry to go around telling people that He was the Son of God, Second Person of the Trinity, God in human form.

In John chapter 5 verses 17 thru 30—Jesus makes 5 claims to His own divinity, 5 claims of equality with the God the Father—we’ve already looked at the first two:

I. Jesus Claims Equality with God in His Person—v.17-18

John 5:17-18 (NKJV)

¹⁷ But Jesus answered them, "My Father...¹⁸ 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.

As we have been saying, in Jewish culture a son was always considered to be equal with his father in personhood—in fact, the Jewish mindset on the subject was that the son was an equal *extension* of his father.

Which feeds into the statement that Jesus would go on to make to His disciples—“*If you’ve seen Me you have seen the Father for I and the Father are One*”—in other words, “*I am an extension of My Father.*”

And so, in the minds of Jesus’ enemies (and rightfully so) anyone claiming to be the Son of God was claiming to be equal with God, which meant He was also claiming to be God—which is why the Jewish leaders accused Him of blasphemy and wanted to kill Him!

II. Jesus Claims Equality with God in His Work—v.19

John 5:19 (NKJV)

¹⁹ Then Jesus answered and said to them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He sees the Father do; for whatever He does, the Son also does in like manner.

And the work that Jesus was referring to, the work He and His Father are constantly doing 24 hours a day, 7 days a week—is the work of saving souls, or in other words—the work of redemption!

When Jesus worked on the Sabbath (or any other day) healing people—it was *the work of redemption* by showing the Jewish people (and even the Gentiles) that He was the prophesied Messiah of Israel (Isa.35:5-6).

And being the Messiah, the Jewish Scriptures taught, that He would be the Savior of mankind—saving people from the grip of Satan and making them members of God’s Kingdom forever!

And so, when Jesus claimed to be the Messiah, the Son of God, and proved it by working miracles, healing the lame, casting out demons and even raising the dead—it was doing the work of redemption by revealing Himself to be the Savior Who would save them from their sins and make them children of the living God if they would receive Him into their hearts by faith.

Again, verse 19 is a statement of divinity in that no one can *do* what God does (the work of redemption) unless they themselves are God, because—only God can save a soul!

III. Jesus Claims Equality with God in His Power Over Life and Death—v.20-21

John 5:20a (NKJV)

²⁰ For the Father loves the Son, and shows Him all things that He Himself does...

It’s interesting the word Jesus uses here for the Father’s love for the Son.

It isn’t the common word in the N.T. used for God’s love (agape)—but here Jesus uses the Greek word *phileo*.

Phileo is a word for love that speaks of the deep feelings of affection that two very dear friends have for one another.

Agape love is an unconditional, giving love that isn’t connected to or motivated by feelings—as when we ‘love’ our enemies. (Explain)

But again, this is different from *phileo* or ‘friendship love’.

This is the only time in the New Testament that the word *phileo* is used to refer to the Father's love for the Son.

And in the Greek, it's in the present tense which describes a love that is ongoing and unbroken—an affectionate love that has gone on *from* all and will continue *for* all eternity. (Comment)

This is Jesus' way of saying, *"My Father has such deep affection for Me, that He never does anything that He doesn't reveal to Me, and I never do anything He hasn't directed Me to do—even healing on the Sabbath."*

Jesus went on to say that, whatever the Father has directed and empowered the Son to do up until this point would be minor in comparison to what the Father would direct the Son to do in the future—

John 5:20-21 (NKJV)

²⁰ For the Father loves the Son, and shows Him all things that He Himself does; **and He will show Him greater works than these, that you may marvel.** ²¹ **For as the Father raises the dead and gives life to them, even so the Son gives life to whom He will.**

Earlier in John 5, the Father had directed Jesus to heal a man who had been lame for 38 years!

And as much as that healing had amazed the crowds, Jesus predicted that the more spectacular works were still coming—for the Father would direct the Son to raise the dead that they might marvel (and believe).

One author said—

"For Jesus to claim to have power to raise the dead was a blasphemous thing in the eyes of the Jewish leaders; they gave that power to God alone. They said that Jehovah held the three great keys: the key to open the heavens and give rain (Deut. 28:12); the key to open the womb and give conception (Gen. 30:22); and the key to open the grave and raise the dead (Ezek. 37:13)."

As far as the Gospel records are concerned—up until this point Jesus hadn't yet raised anyone from the dead.

So, the fact that Jesus made this claim that He *would* be raising the dead under His Father's direction—really ratcheted up the opposition against Him.

Not only did His enemies accuse Him of blasphemy for claiming equality with God—but now they began to accuse Him of being demon possessed and out of His mind (John 10:20)—

“He’s going to raise the dead—He’s nuts!—only God can raise the dead!”—EXACTLY!!

John 5:21 (NKJV)

²¹ For as the Father raises the dead and gives life to *them*, even so the Son gives life to whom He will.

In the gospel's, Jesus raised three people from the dead—1. *Jairus' daughter* (Mark 5 & Luke 8); 2. *The widow of Nain's son* (Luke 7:11-17); 3. *Lazarus* (John 11:38-44).

It could be that Jesus raised some others from physical death that weren't recorded in the gospels—but we do know for sure that He raised three.

Of course, the power to give life in the first place thru *conception*, or to give it back to someone who has died thru *resurrection*—is a power that only God possess.

And while it's true that in the O.T. prophets like Elijah and Elisha raised the dead—they never claimed that *they* had the power in themselves to impart life.

They always and only saw themselves as instruments and conduits in the hands of God—who raised the dead thru them.

However, this was not true of Jesus, whom John opens up his gospel by telling us in chapter 1 verse 4, *“In Him was life...”*—but only after telling us in verse 1 that *He is God*.

Consistent with His divinity, Jesus claimed to have the power in Himself to raise the dead—

John 10:17-18 (NKJV)

¹⁷ Therefore My Father loves Me, because I lay down My life that I may take it again. ¹⁸ No one takes it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again..."

That's why verse 21 is also a declaration of divinity as spoken by Jesus of Himself—for in it He is claiming to have the power to impart life—

John 5:21 (NKJV)

²¹ **For as the Father raises the dead and gives life to *them*, even so the Son gives life to whom He will.**

Satan, as powerful a being as he is, doesn't possess the power to give life or to resurrect the dead—"What about when he resurrects the Antichrist from the dead?" (Revelation 13—Explain)

Now, that brings us to the fourth point in our outline, which is tied to our last main point—**"Jesus Claims Equality with God in His Power Over Life and Death"**—

IV. Jesus Claims Equality with God in His Authority to Judge—v.22, 24-30

John 5:21-22 (NKJV)

²¹ For as the Father raises the dead and gives life to *them*, even so the Son gives life to whom He will. ²² **For the Father judges no one, but has committed all judgment to the Son,**

So, Jesus claimed to be equal with the Father in His power to raise the dead—and now He couples it with His claim of being equal with the Father in His authority to judge the world.

In these two verses, Jesus connects the raising of the physically dead, which He will do someday—"Do not marvel at this; for the hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear His voice and come forth..." (v.28-29a), to the coming and final judgment of all mankind (Revelation 20).

What's confusing to some and why they misinterpret what Jesus is actually saying about the resurrection of the dead in verses 21-29 is because—there are three different resurrections in view, one spiritual and the other two are physical.

We will look at this next week—but for the rest of our time this morning let's talk about the concept of a God who judges people for the lives they have lived on the earth.

There are many people in our country (and around the world) who have a problem believing in a God who judges anyone for anything.

And so they deny and reject the concept of God being a Judge altogether in favor of a loving, benign, non-judgmental deity who is the epitome of tolerance and acceptance.

And yet, God is called in Scripture the **“Judge of all the earth”** in Genesis 18:25 and in other places—

Psalm 7:11 (NKJV)

¹¹ God *is* a just judge, And God is angry *with the wicked* every day.

Psalm 9:8 (NKJV)

⁸ He shall judge the world in righteousness, And He shall administer judgment for the peoples in uprightness.

Psalm 50:6 (NKJV)

⁶ Let the heavens declare His righteousness, For God Himself *is* Judge.

So, it is obvious and undeniable from Scripture that God, although supremely loving, is also supremely righteous—a God of justice that must judge sin and punish sinners.

But here in John 5:22, Jesus tells us clearly that **“the Father judges no one, but has committed all judgement to the Son”**—a truth repeated in the epistles:

2 Timothy 4:1 (NKJV)

¹ I charge *you* therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who will judge the living and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom:

2 Timothy 4:8 (NKJV)

⁸ Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing.

You see, the only Person in the universe who has the right to sit in judgement of the people of this world is the One who created those people and gave them life in the first place—God Almighty and more specifically, Jesus Christ.

Colossians 1:16 (NLT2)

¹⁶ for through him [Jesus Christ] 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.

John 1:3 (NKJV)

³ All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made.

Furthermore, the only Person who could righteously sit in judgment of mankind was a Man (a descendant of Adam) who Himself was morally perfect and sinless—and that Man of course was Jesus Christ—God in human form, the God-Man!

And so, when Jesus said the Father has given Him the responsibility to judge the people of this world—it was a declaration of divinity.

Warren Wiersbe—

“So, Jesus claimed to be equal with the Father in His works, but He also claimed to be equal with the Father in executing judgment (John 5:22). To the orthodox Jew, Jehovah God was “the Judge of all the earth” (Gen. 18:25); and no one dared to apply that august title to himself. But Jesus did! By claiming to be the Judge, He claimed to be God...”

Now in our current man-centered, self-deification, self-worship, everyone doing whatever seems right in their own eyes culture—many people believe that God doesn't have the right to judge people for the way they're living.

And that's because they see themselves as the god of their own lives (and therefore autonomous), and as such they maintain that every person has the right to live anyway they want.

Folks, nothing could be more absurd or further from the truth.

When someone tries to argue that point with me, that it isn't right that God tries to control people's lives by telling them what they can and cannot do—even to the point of judging them for not doing what He has commanded, I tell them—

“Look, God has given you life and has allowed you to live on the planet He created. Further, you are breathing His air, drinking His water and eating His food—He has every right to demand that you obey His laws!”

He is the King of all the earth and we are (all of us) His subjects—the only difference being that some accept that and submit to Him while others reject that and live in rebellion against Him.

Those who reject God's authority over their lives and choose rather to live in rebellion against His laws—He promises to judge someday.

He has no choice, because He is a righteous Judge and has to punish sin.

Most of the people in this world say they believe in God—but only in a loving God who doesn't judge people and send them to hell.

Many people today have a problem believing in a God Who judges those who are living in rebellion against His commandments.

These folks are at war with Him because they refuse to bow the knee in submission to His authority over their lives.

The Bible is clear that judgment awaits the wicked, and the Second Coming of Christ is the occasion for a worldwide judgment unparalleled in Scripture since the time of Noah's flood.

2 Thessalonians 1:6-9 (NLT2)

⁶ In his justice he will pay back those who persecute you. ⁷ And God will provide rest for you who are being persecuted and also for us when the Lord Jesus appears from heaven. He will come with his mighty angels, ⁸ in flaming fire, bringing judgment on those who don't know God and on those who refuse to obey the Good News [Gospel] of our Lord Jesus. ⁹ They will be punished with eternal destruction, forever separated from the Lord and from his glorious power.

Matthew 25:46 (NKJV)

"And these will go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into eternal life."

The word for 'everlasting' punishment; and 'eternal' life—are the same word in the Greek.

Jesus is telling us that even as heaven is eternal—so is hell!

And yet when asked 76% of people in America said they believe in heaven—but only 6% said they believe in hell.

In fact, in a recent survey taken among professing Christians—only 40% of them said they believe in a literal place called hell where God sends people who do not personally trust in His Son, Jesus Christ.

And since less and less people say they believe in hell and preaching about hell makes them uncomfortable and even angry—therefore, in an effort to appease their congregations, less and less pastors are preaching on hell anymore today (if they even believe in hell at all).

This is mostly due to the fact that, in an attempt to fill seats in the sanctuary by keeping things positive, many pastors today have almost exclusively focused on the love of God while neglecting the righteousness and justice of God in their preaching and teaching.

The result is that almost everyone today views God as a benevolent, grey haired, grandfatherly old gentleman who is too kind and loving to ever send anyone to such a horrible place like hell.

Consequently, we now live in a society where there is no fear of God—in other words no fear of coming judgment, no fear that people will have to stand before God someday and give an account for the way they lived their lives on the earth.

Solomon said in the book of Proverbs that when people have no fear of the Lord they don't hate evil; and when people don't hate evil the result is lawlessness—a blatant disrespect and disregard for the laws of God.

And when people live lawless lives they *will* be judged someday.

And Jesus is telling us in Matt.25:46, and in many other places that, even as there is an eternal place of blessing for the righteous called heaven—there is also an eternal place of torment for the unrighteous called hell.

And while it's true that the God of the Bible *is* a loving, merciful and gracious God who doesn't *want* to send anyone to hell—even as God said thru the prophet Ezekiel, “*Turn, please turn from your sin for why will you die? I get no pleasure out of the death of the wicked”.*

This truth was repeated in the New Testament—

1 Timothy 2:3-4 (NKJV)

³ For this *is* good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, ⁴ who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.

2 Peter 3:9 (NKJV)

⁹ The Lord is not slack concerning *His* promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.

And so, while it's true that God *is* a loving, merciful and gracious God who doesn't want to send anyone to hell—God has to punish sin or else He would no longer be the righteous Judge of the whole earth (Genesis 18:25).

The problem today is that people have become so jaded by all the immorality and godlessness going on around them that sin is really no big deal anymore and because of it (and here is where most people make a fatal mistake)—they don't think it's a big deal to God anymore either.

Okay, maybe murder and rape—but certainly not lying, coveting, fornication, adultery or homosexuality.

Just understand this that—nobody goes to hell by *chance*; they go to hell by *choice*.

Even as Joshua challenged the children of Israel to make a choice—“*Choose this day what God you are going to serve—but as for me and my house we will serve the LORD!*” (Joshua 24:15)

Jesus is coming again to judge the living and the dead and to establish a kingdom that will never end.

Jesus will be one of two things to every person who has ever lived—loving Savior or righteous Judge—and what you do with Jesus now will determine what He becomes to you then.

(Close with story of man who saved a young man from certain death on horseback only to appear before him years later in court as his judge)