

45. The Gospel of John—5:29b

“Jesus Declares His Divinity” Pt.7

(10/14/18)

We are currently in chapter 5 in our study of John’s gospel—in a series we’ve entitled, *“Jesus Declares His Divinity.”* (John 8:24)

In John’s gospel chapter 5 verses 17 thru 30—Jesus makes 5 claims to His own divinity, 5 claims of equality with God the Father—

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

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

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

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

V. Jesus Claims Equality with God in Honor—v.23

Now, last time in our study we were looking at the fourth main point in our outline—

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

John 5:20-22 (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. ²² For the Father judges no one, but has committed all judgment to the Son,

As we said last time, in verses 21-22, first Jesus claimed equality with the Father in His power to raise the dead, and then He coupled it with a claim of equality with the Father in His authority to judge the world.

And now starting with verse 24 and running thru verse 29—the Lord amplifies this truth by focusing His remarks on the resurrection of the dead and the coming judgment.

John 5:24-25, 28-29 (NKJV)

²⁴ "Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life.

²⁵ Most assuredly, I say to you, the hour is coming, and now is, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God; and those who hear will live...²⁸ Do not marvel at this; for the hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear His voice ²⁹ and come forth--those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation.

These verses have been called some of the greatest in the Bible for helping people understand what the Bible teaches about resurrection and the coming judgment—and yet they are not without some confusion.

And the reason for the confusion with regard to what Jesus is saying here about the resurrection of the dead is because—there are three different resurrections in view—one is a spiritual resurrection and the other two are physical resurrections.

A. The Spiritual Resurrection of the Lost—v.24-27

B. The Physical Resurrection of Believers—v.28-29a

C. The Physical Resurrection of Unbelievers—v.29b

A. The Spiritual Resurrection of the Lost—v.24-25

In verses 24-25 Jesus describes the resurrection of the lost to eternal life—which Paul talked about in Ephesians 2:1—*"And you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins"*

So the ‘**dead**’ in verse 25 is a reference to *unbelievers*—those that are *spiritually* dead in trespasses in sins.

They hear the voice of the Son of God (thru the Holy Spirit) when the gospel is preached—and if they believe the message and receive the Savior at that moment they are raised out of spiritual death into spiritual life—resurrection life.

So, the first resurrection that Jesus speaks of is the resurrection of lost souls at the moment of salvation.

B. The Physical Resurrection of Believers—v.28-29a

John 5:28-29 (NKJV)

²⁸ Do not marvel at this; for the hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear His voice ²⁹ and come forth--those who have done good, to the resurrection of life...

When the Lord said, “**The hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear His voice**” (v.28)—

Unlike the ‘**hour**’ Jesus spoke of in v.25 that He said had *already arrived*—this ‘**hour**’ (not a literal 60-minute period of time but a moment in human history) is yet future.

Now, if we only had John 5:28-29 on the subject, we would be left to conclude that this will be one giant all-encompassing resurrection of believers and unbelievers together.

However, we learn from other passages in the N.T. that there will actually be two resurrections of the physically dead—one for believers and the other for unbelievers.

Now, with regard to the physical, bodily resurrection of believers, which Jesus called the ‘**resurrection of life**’ Paul tells us in 1Corinthians 15 that this resurrection is not a single event—but a category that contains multiple resurrections of believers—

1 Corinthians 15:20-23 (NKJV)

²⁰ But now Christ is risen from the dead, *and* has become the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. ²¹ For since by man *came* death, by Man also *came* the resurrection of the dead. ²² For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive. ²³ But each one in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, afterward those *who are* Christ's at His coming.

The word for “*order*” in verse 23, “*But each one (group, will be resurrected) in his own order*” is the Greek word ‘tagma’ and it means “a series of succession.”

Paul is telling us that the physical resurrection of believers doesn’t happen all at once but consists in a series of successive resurrections starting with:

1. The resurrection of Jesus, the Firstfruits

2. The resurrection of the Church saints (Rapture)

3. The resurrection of the Tribulation saints (at Jesus’ Second Coming)

4. The resurrection of the Old Testament saints (at Jesus’ Second Coming)

5. The resurrection of Millennial Kingdom believers (possibly instantaneous when they die)

C. The Physical Resurrection of Unbelievers—v.29b

The final resurrection of all *unbelievers* is what Jesus called—“**the resurrection of condemnation**” in verse 29.

The word ‘**condemnation**’ is a Greek word that means ‘*judgment*’—as in a punitive judgment rendered in a court of law.

This resurrection is described in Revelation 20—starting with verse 5:

Revelation 20:5 (NKJV)

⁵ But the rest of the dead did not live again until the thousand years were finished...

When John the apostle says in v.5, “*the rest of the dead did not live again until the thousand years were finished*” he is referring to—the bodily resurrection of all *unbelievers* who have ever lived upon the earth.

The judgment of unbelievers who will be resurrected to stand before Jesus at the Great White Throne Judgment is described in Revelation 20:11–15 and takes place *after* the Millennial Kingdom (the thousand-year reign of Christ).

These people have been living in hades, conscious and in torment ever since they’re physical death where their body died and was buried but their soul (consciousness) went into hades.

Hades (called ‘Sheol’ in the O.T.) is not the same as *hell* even though the KJV translates both hades and hell with the word “hell”. (Define ‘hades’—Luke 16:19-31)

Revelation 20:6 (NKJV)

⁶ Blessed and holy *is* he who has part in the first resurrection [*not a single event but a category for all true believers who have ever lived upon the earth*]. Over such the second death has no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years.

The second death is referring to the final judgment of all unbelievers in the lake of fire (hell)—

Revelation 20:14 (NKJV)

¹⁴ Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death.

God has promised that whoever belongs to the first resurrection (O.T. saint, N.T. saint or Tribulation Period or Millennial Kingdom saint)—on these the second death will have no power (all of these ‘first resurrection saints’ will never be cast into hell).

I just read an article a couple of weeks ago written by a Wall Street Journal columnist who claimed that the idea of a place called *hell* has ‘outlived’ its usefulness.

The writer contends that hell was an invention of man and adopted by the Christian church to scare people into heaven while further using it to control their lives here on earth—thru fear.

This, he said, was popular and effective in Medieval Christianity when people were unenlightened simpletons and superstitious fools.

However, he went on to say, modern society is *enlightened* and has “outgrown” the notion of scaring people with the threat of future damnation in hell.

This journalist (and we all know how ‘infallible’ journalists are) claims that we need to jettison the idea of a place called hell in favor of a kinder, gentler version of Christianity that chooses to focus on God’s love and mercy rather than scaring folks with an eternal place of torment.

And yet in the book of Revelation chapter 14 we read how that hell is *real* and an *eternal* place of torment for all those cast into it—

Revelation 14:11 (NKJV)

¹¹ And the smoke of their torment ascends forever and ever; and they have no rest day or night...

The idea of a literal place called **hell** where there will be eternal torment is not a very popular idea with most people in our society today.

They ask, “*How can a God of love allow people He created in His own image to suffer eternal torment?*”

And so, because people can’t reconcile the concept of a loving God sending people to hell—they tend to fall into one of three categories with regard to hell:

- a) They ignore it by living in denial concerning the reality of hell (76% of people believe in heaven but only 6% believe in hell).

- b) They try to get around it—Annihilationism; Universalism. (both of these are rooted in wishful thinking rather than in biblical truth.)
- c) They joke about it—*“I’d rather be partying in hell with all my friends than bored in heaven with all those hypocrites.”*

Ten years ago, Cyndi and I spend some time in the Cayman Islands for our 30th anniversary.

We actually stayed on Grand Cayman Island where there is a town called “Hell”.

And it’s kind of a novelty thing—the people of the town get a lot of mileage out of it and it’s good for tourism—everyone wants to visit ‘Hell’ and tell their friends they’ve been to Hell.

They sell Tee-shirts that say things like: *“Let’s all party in Hell”*; *“Go to Hell”*; *“I live in Hell”*; *“I’ve been to Hell and back”* etc.

The devil loves it when people joke about hell and not take it seriously—but the Bible tells us that hell is real and it’s no joke!

Jesus talked about hell more than anyone else; in fact, He talked about it more than He talked about heaven or even love, and I believe He did that because—He didn’t want anyone to go there!

He often talked about hell in the same passage that He talked about heaven—*“And they will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous will go into eternal life.”* (Matt.25:46)

In that verse, not only did the Lord Jesus talk about both heaven and hell in the same sentence but—He said that they were both eternal.

What is Hell?

Hell is a place of *perpetual burning*.

The Greek word is ‘gehenna’ which comes from the Hebrew ‘ge Hinnom’ which means the *valley of Hinnom*.

The valley of Hinnom was a deep, narrow valley to the south of Jerusalem, where the idolatrous Jews offered their children in sacrifice to Molech (Explain).

Later on, after this practice was outlawed, this valley became the city dump where the dead bodies of animals, criminals, and all kinds of garbage was dumped and burned by a fire that was never quenched because the refuse never ended (the part not on fire was usually infested with worms).

And so, in the process of time, this place became a fitting image of the place of *everlasting* fire and destruction known as hell.

A place where the wretched refuse of defiled humanity who refused to receive the love of the truth (gospel) that they would be saved are ‘dumped’ and will endure the perpetual fires of judgment forever and ever.

Jesus believed that hell was *real* and *eternal*—in fact, He stated three times in Mark 9 that hell was a place where “*the fire is never quenched*” and where the “*worm never dies*”. (Comment)

As I just said, Jesus spoke about hell more than anyone else in the N.T.—in fact, the word *gehenna* appears 12 times in the New Testament, and in all but one of these occurrences Jesus spoke it (i.e., James 3:6).

And so, hell (also known as the ‘lake of fire’) is a place of separation from God located in the ‘outer darkness’ (Matt. 8:12; 22:13; 25:30) of the universe.

This is where the ungodly will someday be sent and experience the righteous judgment of God for all the ungodliness and sin they committed throughout the course of their life on the earth.

All sin is considered to be a crime against a holy God and those crimes *must* be paid for.

If a person won’t receive payment through the blood of Christ shed on Calvary’s cross for their sins, then—they will have to pay by being punished for their own sins.

How Could a God of Love Create a Place Like Hell to Send People To?

A. God didn’t create hell for man

Matthew 25:41 (NLT2)

⁴¹ “Then the King will turn to those on the left and say, ‘Away with you, you cursed ones, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his demons.’

B. God doesn’t send anyone to hell—people choose to go there

Romans 2:5, 8 (NLT2)

⁵ But because you are stubborn and refuse to turn from your sin, you are storing up terrible punishment for yourself. For a day of anger is coming, when God’s righteous judgment will be revealed... ⁸ ...he will pour out his anger and wrath on those who live for themselves, who refuse to obey the truth and instead live lives of wickedness.

“Oh, you preachers make me sick!” a fellow said to a witnessing Christian on the train one day. The Christian assured him he was not a preacher. “I don’t care what you are. You Christians are always talking about a man going to hell because Adam sinned.” “No,” the Christian said, “you need not go to hell because Adam sinned. You will go to hell because you refuse the remedy provided for Adam’s sin. Don’t keep complaining about something that has absolutely been

taken care of. If you go to hell, you will go over the broken body of Jesus Christ, who died to keep you out.”

Nobody goes to hell by chance; they go to hell by choice—“*That’s ridiculous—nobody would choose to go to hell.*”

Jesus said, “*If you’re not for Me you are against Me.*” (Explain)

C. God is love but He is also a righteous and a just God

Genesis 18:25 (NLT2)

²⁵ Surely you wouldn’t do such a thing, destroying the righteous along with the wicked. Why, you would be treating the righteous and the wicked exactly the same! Surely you wouldn’t do that! Should not the Judge of all the earth do what is right?”

God has to punish sin or else He would no longer be the *righteous* Judge of the whole earth.

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.

Revelation 21:8 (NKJV)

⁸ But the cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death.”

You see, because God doesn’t rain fire down from heaven every time someone sins against Him people have gotten the idea that God really doesn’t care how we live down here.

Psalms 7:11-13 (NKJV)

¹¹ God is a just judge, And God is angry with the wicked every day. ¹² If he does not turn back, He will sharpen His sword; He bends His bow and makes it ready. ¹³ He also prepares for Himself instruments of death; He makes His arrows into fiery shafts.

Right now God is restraining His wrath by His great love and mercy—“*not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.*” (2Peter 3:9c)

And yet the anger of God against sin is growing day by day—like a volcano that is building up pressure.

One day it is going to erupt and then His wrath against sin will no longer be *restrained* it will be released (Revelation 6-19)!

Most people comfort themselves with the knowledge that God is love, and surely a God of love won't send anyone to hell except the worst of humanity (the Hitlers, Stalins and other brutal dictators and mass murderers)—“*But certainly, He won't send a good person like me to hell.*”

Proverbs 20:6 (NKJV)

⁶ Most men will proclaim each his own goodness...

Romans 3:10-12 (NLT2)

¹⁰ As the Scriptures say, “No one is righteous— not even one. ¹¹ No one is truly wise; no one is seeking God. ¹² All have turned away; all have become useless. No one does good, not a single one.”

Romans 3:23 (NKJV)

²³ ...all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,

Romans 6:23 (NKJV)

²³ ...the wages of sin *is* death...

Look, don't count on God's love to save you if you refuse to repent of your sins and get your life right with God.

God's love can't save you from hell—all it can do is provide a way for you by which you can be saved—but you have to accept it by faith.

John 3:16-17 (NKJV)

¹⁶ For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish [in hell] but have everlasting life. ¹⁷ For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.

God didn't create you for hell—He created you to spend eternity with Him in heaven—but you must decide where you'll spend eternity.