

47. The Gospel of John—5:23

“Jesus Declares His Divinity” Pt.9

(10/28/18)

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

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

John 5:20-23 (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, ²³ **that all should honor the Son just as they honor the Father. He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent Him.**

So here, we are given the reason as to why the Father has given His Son the authority to raise the dead and judge the world—so that **“all should honor the Son just as they honor the Father.”**

This is the final and greatest statement of Jesus testifying to the fact that He is God—equal with the Father.

God in His Word has repeatedly warned that He will not share His glory and honor with any other ‘god’ and that—He alone is worthy of praise, honor and worship—

Isaiah 42:8 (NKJV)

⁸ I *am* the LORD, that *is* My name; And My glory I will not give to another, Nor My praise to carved images. [‘other gods’]

Since the Father wants the Son to be honored as much as Himself—the Father is declaring that the Son is God, co-equal with the Father (and the Spirit).

Just what does it mean to honor the Son?

The Greek word is *timáo* and means to: *esteem, honor, and/or reverence—especially with regard to one’s parents.*

This Greek word isn’t a word used for worship—however in this context, it expresses “*the sentiment of religious reverence from which worship flows.*”

Let me give you three main ways we honor the Son—which we’ve already studied in this series, but which Jesus’ statement in verse 23 sums up.

The first way we honor the Son is obvious—

A. By believing He is God

This whole series has been about Jesus declaring His divinity.

If you remember, what ‘launched’ us into this series was when Jesus healed a man who had been lame for 38 years on the Sabbath.

When accused of violating Sabbath law by the Jewish leadership, Jesus responded by saying—**"My Father has been working until now, and I have been working."** (v.17)

In response to that statement we read in verse 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."**

In Jewish culture, the son was always considered to be equal with his father in essence and being—and so, Jesus claiming God was His Father was making Himself equal with God.

And of course, no one can be equal *with God* who is *not God*, so therefore, they believed Jesus should die for blasphemy for claiming to be 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 to go everywhere proclaiming His divinity!

And now He says in verse 23, that the reason the Father has given His Son the authority to raise the dead and judge the world was so that—**all should honor the Son just as they honor the Father.**

Commentator William MacDonald put it well—

"This is a most important statement, and one of the clearest proofs in the Bible of the deity of the Lord Jesus Christ. Throughout the Bible we are taught that God alone is to be worshiped. In the Ten Commandments, the people were forbidden to have any god but the one true God. Now

we are taught **that all should honor the Son just as they honor the Father**. The only conclusion we can come to from this verse is that Jesus Christ is God.

Many people claim to worship God but deny that Jesus Christ is God. They say that He was a good man or more god-like than any other man who ever lived. But this verse puts Him on an absolute equality with God and requires that men should give Him the same honor which they give to God the Father. If a person **does not honor the Son**, then he **does not honor the Father**. It is useless to claim a love for God if one does not have the same love for the Lord Jesus Christ. If you have never realized before who Jesus Christ is, then ponder this verse carefully. Remember that it is the Word of God, and accept the glorious truth that Jesus Christ is God manifest in the flesh.”

Most Christians take the deity of Christ and His equality with the Father for granted—but the history of the Church shows that this was not always the case.

One church historian explains—

“In the course of Christian history, few events loom larger than the Council of Nicea in 325, when the newly converted Roman Emperor Constantine called bishops from around the world to present-day Turkey. The church had reached a theological crossroads. Led by an Alexandrian theologian named Arius, one school of thought argued that Jesus had undoubtedly been a remarkable leader, but he was not God in flesh. Arius proved an expert logician and master of extracting biblical proof texts that seemingly illustrated differences between Jesus and God, such as John 14:28: “the Father is greater than I.” In essence, Arius argued that Jesus of Nazareth could not possibly share God the Father’s unique divinity.”

Another historian continues—

“Most of the bishops were repelled by the idea that Jesus Christ could be thought of as what to them amounted to a *created* being. When they worshiped Christ, they did not worship a creature — they worshiped God. They were saved not by a *created* being, but by God. The bishops proceeded to craft a creedal statement of faith concerning what they believed about the Son of God...The bishops wrote in their statements that Jesus Christ was “*God of God, light of light, true God of true God, begotten, not made, of one substance with the Father.*” A key phrase was “*of one substance,*” which translates the Greek *homoousios*. This means that what God is in his essence, Jesus Christ the Son of God is also. Eventually all the bishops except for two signed the creedal statement, believing that it contained the ancient faith of the apostolic church and that it was an accurate reflection of the truth of God’s nature to which the New Testament points.”

The Arian heresy, that Jesus was a created being and not God from all eternity, remained ‘buried’ in the Church among apostate Christians down thru the centuries and was eventually ‘resurrected’ to become the foundational doctrine of the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society, also known as Jehovah’s Witnesses—who definitely don’t honor the Son! (Explain)

One pastor related an exchange he had with someone—

“A few weeks ago, somebody came to me and said, “Can you believe in God without believing in Christ?” I said yes, but it’s ridiculous because what you’re doing is trying to honor the Father without honoring the Son and you’ve misread both the Father and the Son. “Well, could a person be saved if they didn’t know about the Son and just believed in the Father?” No, because unless you honor the Son, you dishonor the Father. They go together.”

Warren Wiersbe—

“Our Lord claimed equality in another area, namely, equal honor with the Father (John 5:23). The fact that He is the appointed Judge should cause men to honor Him. What a tremendous claim: if you do not honor the Son, you are not honoring the Father! The “religious” people who say that they worship God, but who deny the deity of Christ, have neither the Father nor the Son! Apart from Jesus Christ, we cannot know the Father, worship the Father, or serve the Father.”

So, the first way we honor the Son is by believing He is God—the Creator of heaven and earth—

Colossians 1:16 (NKJV)

¹⁶ For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him [to bring Him honor and glory].

This honor would also include believing that, as God, Jesus is coming back someday to judge the living and the dead—

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 (Second Coming) and His kingdom (end of the Millennial Kingdom)...

A. By believing He is God—the Creator and Judge of all the earth

B. By Receiving Him as Savior

Is it possible to believe that Jesus is God and still not go to heaven?

The answer to that question is YES.

There are many who believe that Jesus is God (I did as a Roman Catholic) and even ‘honor’ Him by *calling* Him ‘Lord’—that are still not redeemed.

Luke 6:46 (NKJV)

⁴⁶ "But why do you call Me 'Lord, Lord,' and do not do the things which I say?"

Matthew 7:21-23 (NKJV)

²¹ "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. ²² Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?' ²³ And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!'"

It isn't enough to believe that Jesus is God—the demons believe that and tremble. (James 2:19)

You must believe that Jesus is God (John 8:24)—and also receive Him as your *personal* Savior if you're going to benefit from His sacrifice on the cross for your sins as the Lamb of God.

John the Baptist—“*Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world*”—which is true but only received by one person at a time and then only thru faith.

Exodus 12:1-7, 12-13 (NKJV)

¹ Now the LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt, saying, ² "This month *shall be* your beginning of months; it *shall be* the first month of the year to you. ³ Speak to all the congregation of Israel, saying: 'On the tenth *day* of this month every man shall take for himself a lamb, according to the house of *his* father, a lamb for a household. ⁴ And if the household is too small for the lamb, let him and his neighbor next to his house take *it* according to the number of the persons; according to each man's need you shall make your count for the lamb. ⁵ Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male of the first year. You may take *it* from the sheep or from the goats. ⁶ Now you shall keep it until the fourteenth day of the same month. Then the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it at twilight. ⁷ And they shall take *some* of the blood and put *it* on the two doorposts and on the lintel of the houses where they eat it....¹² For I will pass through the land of Egypt on that night, and will strike all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment: I *am* the LORD. ¹³ Now the blood shall be a sign for you on the houses where you *are*. And when I see the blood, I will pass over you; and the plague shall not be on you to destroy *you* when I strike the land of Egypt.

I want you to notice the progression—“**a lamb**”, “**the lamb**” and then “**your lamb**”.

This happens to be how many in the world see Jesus, the Lamb of God.

1. Some believe that Jesus is a Lamb

They believe that Jesus is one of many roads that lead to God—even though Jesus Himself said in John 14:6—“*I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.*”

2. Others believe that Jesus is the Lamb

They believe that Jesus really is the Son of God the one and only Savior of the world—the only way to heaven.

Maybe they grew up in church and went to Awana’s when they were young—so they know the gospel—but they stop short of committing their life to Him, often because they are living a life of sin and disobedience toward God and they are not willing to give it up to follow Jesus.

3. You must make Jesus your Lamb if His blood is going to protect you from the judgment that’s coming

Paul even called Jesus our “Passover” (1Cor.5:7)—in other words Jesus in His earthly life not only observed the feast—He fulfilled the feast in His death.

Jesus was the Lamb of God, without spot (original sin) or blemish (acquired sin) who was killed and whose blood must be applied to the “*house of our heart*” by faith.

This will cause the judgment of God to *pass-over* us just as it passed over each house in Egypt where the blood of the lamb was applied.

C. By submitting to Him as Lord

The third way we honor Jesus is when we submit to His Lordship.

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 as Savior and submitting to Him as Lord—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! (Comment)

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. (Comment)

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)

⁴⁶ “So why do you keep calling me ‘Lord, Lord!’ when you don’t do what I say? ⁴⁷ I will show you what it’s like when someone comes to me, listens to my teaching, and then follows it. ⁴⁸ 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. ⁴⁹ 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.

In this way we honor Him.

But even that starts with our understanding of Who He is—and not just theologically but also 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.

Those that honor Jesus on earth will someday be honored by the Father—

John 12:26 (NKJV)

²⁶ If anyone serves Me, let him follow Me; and where I am, there My servant will be also. If anyone serves Me, him *My* Father will honor. [with rewards and honor in heaven]

Someday, every person will eventually obey the Father’s command to honor His Son, Jesus Christ—notice in verse 23 the word “all”—“**that all should honor the Son just as they honor the Father...**”

Well, the Bible declares that someday *all* people *will* honor the Son—either willingly or unwillingly—because some day every knee throughout the entire universe is going to bow before the Son.

Philippians 2:9-11 (NLT2)

⁹ Therefore, God elevated him to the place of highest honor and gave him the name above all other names, ¹⁰ that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, ¹¹ and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

The only thing left for a person to decide is whether they are going to bow the knee to Jesus in this life willingly out of love—or will they wait until they stand before Him in judgment and bow the knee to Him begrudgingly—before they are sentenced to hell!

The choice is yours—but make no mistake about it—one way or another you *will* honor the Son.

One pastor put it well—

“And so, Christ claims equality of person, works, power, sovereignty, judgment and honor. And may I say to you that either this is a shocking startling blasphemous claim by an unrivaled mad man—or else it is true. The Jews decided to believe it was blasphemous. You have that same choice. And I want you to notice verse 24 and see what your choice determines. *“Truly, truly I say unto you, he that heareth My word and believeth on Him that sent Me ... hath everlasting life.”* That’s the gift for those who believe. *“And shall not come into judgment but is passed from death unto life.”*

There’s the two options. If you’re going to take the side that Jesus Christ was the world’s greatest liar and blasphemer, then your inheritance is death and judgment. If you receive Christ as Savior, it’s life and eternal life. The choice is yours. The same choice that confronted those Jews. I pray to God you choose better than they.”