

The Church of the Servant King

Survey of the Bible Series – The Gospel of John (SB_JN5B_Jesus Defends His Co-Equality with the Father)

Introduction

In our previous lesson, we studied John 5:1-17. In this section of the chapter, Jesus healed a man on the Sabbath who had been an invalid for 38 years. Immediately, the religious Jews took offense to this apparent violation of the Mosaic Law. They began to persecute Jesus and Jesus responded to them in a manner that indicated His equality with God the Father. This statement intensified the persecution to the point that the Jewish religious leadership sought “all the more to kill Him” (v. 18). As we noted, this represents a turning point in John’s Gospel since up to this point in the Gospel, the emphasis has been upon the response of faith to the testimony about Jesus. In the remainder of the chapter, Jesus responds to this attack of the Jews with a defense of His equality with the Father.

The Nature of the Relationship Between the Father and the Son (5:19-20)

Up to this point in Israel’s history, Israel primarily knew God as Yahweh although they were familiar with prophecies regarding the Messiah as the Son of God (e.g. Psa 2; 110:1; Isa 7:14; 9:6) as well as Moses’ use of the plural noun Elohim (e.g. Ge 1:1) and his use of the plural personal pronoun “us” in phrases referring to the Godhead (e.g. “let us make man” – Ge 1:26). Now, the Son of God was present and had been manifested, therefore, if a man does not honor the Son, he cannot honor the Father.

In verse 19, Jesus affirms His dependence upon the Father’s will. Jesus did not act upon His own initiative in order to pursue His own agenda. Rather, Jesus patterned His actions after His intimate knowledge of the will and purpose of God the Father. In His humanity, Jesus possessed the greatest capability ever possessed by a man. He had the mental ability to succeed in all the affairs of this world and to demonstrate the superiority of His person and intellect even to the extent of establishing His own kingdom to glorify Himself independent of the Father. No doubt, this was the basis for Satan’s third temptation of Jesus in the wilderness (Matt 4:8-9). Jesus “could not” do anything of Himself because He deliberately chose not to execute a plan different from the Father’s plan for Him.

The reason Jesus chose not to pursue His own work was because His every thought was upon the Father’s plan and purpose for Him that included an understanding of just how much hung in the balance in terms of angelic and human history. Paul records that Jesus did not consider His equality with God the Father something to be retained or held so that He might become human and thereby accomplish man’s redemption by means of His death (Phil 2:6-8).

Principle: The key to greatness in the spiritual realm is to become Christ centric in our perspective on life in this worldly realm.

Application: How do you define success in life? Are they based upon a worldly standard related to your work, family, career, social status, etc? Or have you died to self-glorification in the interest of Christ glorification? (See Ro 12:1-2 and Gal 2:20)

The Greek word in verse 20 translated “love” (as in “the Father loves the Son”) is the 3rd person, singular, present, active, indicative of *phileo* (φιλέω) and is the more intimate of the Greek words for love. It carries the sense of being related or to treat someone as one of one’s

own people.¹ The greater works to which Jesus referred may have been a reference to such events as the resurrection of Lazarus (Jn 11) and Jesus' own resurrection, ascension and session.

Principle: The way in which we enter into a loving relationship with Jesus such as exists between God the Father and God the Son is to become more dependent upon Him, see Him work in our lives to accomplish His will, and experience His power.

Application: Have you such a relationship with Jesus? Have you learned to depend upon Him, e.g. faith resting in His promises and principles? Have you seen answered prayer in your life? Have you experienced the omnipotent power of the Holy Spirit available in the divine power sphere?²

The Father and the Son Are Worthy of Honor (5:21-23)

In verses 21-23, Jesus teaches the principle that both the Father and the Son are worthy of honor. Jesus provides two reasons why men should honor Him as they honor the Father.

- First, in verse 21, Jesus indicates that just as the Father **raises the dead and gives life**, even so the Son gives life everlasting (v. 24).
- Second, in verse 22, Jesus indicates that all **judgment** has been committed to Him from the Father.

For these two reasons, the Son is worthy of honor just as the Father is worthy of honor (v. 23).

Jesus Provides More Teaching Regarding Life and Judgment (5:24-30)

In verses 24-30, Jesus provides more teaching on the subjects of everlasting life, resurrection and judgment after stating His position in verse 23. The focus of each of the verses in this section are as follows:

- Verse 24 – everlasting life – no judgment through believing Jesus' word
- Verse 25 – everlasting life is given to the dead upon hearing the voice of the Son of God
- Verses 26-27 – the power over everlasting life and judgment is given to the Son
- Verses 28-29 – resurrection and judgment
- Verse 30 – Jesus restates His opening argument that was first stated in verse 19 – what the Son does is based upon what He has seen the Father do

In verses 28-29, Jesus speaks of resurrection and the basis for His judgment. Some experience a resurrection to life and others experience a resurrection to condemnation. Based upon this passage alone, this seems to be a reference to the same point in time; however, as we have previously studied, this is really a reference to two different resurrections that are separated by over 1000 years.³ Many in Christendom⁴ view Jesus' statements in verses 28-29 as a

¹ Gerhard Kittel, *The Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, William B. Eerdmans, 1985), Abridged one volume, electronic version by Logos Research Systems.

² I assume a familiarity with the various components of the divine power sphere that we have studied in depth on previous occasions, i.e. 1) yieldedness; 2) humility; 3) objectivity; 4) momentum; 5) personal love for God; 6) impersonal or unconditional love for man; 7) momentum testing; 8) sharing the happiness of God.

³ The 1st Resurrection consists of four separate waves – 1) Jesus (1 Co 15:23; Col 1:18); 2) Dead in Christ and living believers at the Rapture (1 Thess 1:10; 4:13-18; Re 3:10); 3) Tribulation believers who died and all Old Testament saints (Dan 12:13; Re 20:4-5); 4) Millennial believers (Re 20:11-15, esp. v. 15 which implies the presence of believers). The 2nd Resurrection consists of only unbelievers and occurs at the end of the Millennium (Re 20:11-15).

reference to a single resurrection where all people who have ever lived will be judged to see whether they will go to heaven or hell. This position is contrary to the rest of Scripture's teaching on the subject.

They also misinterpret the basis of the judgment – whether one has done “good” or “evil” – to be one's works. However, this position is also contrary to the remainder of Scripture's teaching on the subject (e.g. Re 20:11-15). The “good” in context is belief in Jesus' Person and teaching (3:36). The “evil” is rejection of Jesus. If anyone questioned Jesus' authority to be man's judge, the answer is found in the fact that it was the Father Who gave Him this authority (vv. 19, 30).

The Fourfold Witness Validates Jesus' Claims (5:31-39, 45-47)

In this section of the chapter, Jesus' Claims are validated by four different witnesses. While Jesus' own witness to these claims is sufficient (Jn 8:14), Jesus condescends to His opposition to provide independent testimony. When Jesus states in verse 31 – “If I bear witness of Myself, My witness is not true” – Jesus meets the demands of the Mosaic Law which states that there must be two or more witnesses before a thing could be proved (Deut 17:6; 19:15). This principle is also taught as part of Church Age truth (see 1 Tim 5:19). The four witnesses are:

- ❑ The Father (5:32, 37-38) – through Scripture and through the voice at Jesus' baptism
- ❑ John the Baptist (5:33-35) – John repeatedly bore witness to Jesus Christ (1:19, 20, 26,29,36)
- ❑ The works of Jesus (5:36) – all of Jesus' works were a part of one work given by the Father for Jesus to finish (4:34)
- ❑ Scriptures (5:38-39, 45-47) – the Scriptures attest to Jesus as the Christ (Ge 49:10; Deut 18:18 cf. Lu 24:27, 44)

Jesus' Final Appeal to His Opposition (5:40-44)

In spite of all of this testimony, His hearers refused to honor Him as God the Father had honored Him through their witness. They could not give Jesus the honor due Him because they sought honor in the eyes of others instead of seeking the honor that comes from God. They diligently searched the Scriptures for eternal life and professed belief in Moses, yet they remained spiritually blind to Truth. Such is the nature of the religious man or woman.

Principle: The religious man or woman can have an academic knowledge of the Scriptures, yet miss its spiritual significance to his or her life.

Application: Are you missing the spiritual dimension of your Christian life even though you are diligent in the study of Scripture?

⁴ I use this term to refer to all who espouse to be “Christian” in their religious faith; however, many are not actually believers.