

Jesus' Son of God Defense (Part 1)
John 5:15-21

I. A little review –

¹⁵ The man departed and told the Jews that it was Jesus who had made him well. ¹⁶ For this reason the Jews persecuted Jesus, and sought to kill Him, because He had done these things on the Sabbath. John 5:15–16 (NKJV)

1. *Two weeks ago, I preached about the man who had an infirmity 38 years, whom Jesus had healed, miraculously on a sabbath day!*
2. *Last week, I preached what I called a sabbath sampler, it included facts about the sabbath including:*
 - A. *Breaking the sabbath, by working on it, was to be punishable by death – Exodus 31:15*
 - B. *Yet, Jesus argued for doing good on the sabbath, healing on the sabbath – Luke 6:6-11*
 - C. *I mentioned also, among other things, that the sabbath was a changing command, even in the Old Testament its reason had changed from Creation to Redemption, see Exodus 20:8-11 compared to Deuteronomy 5:12-15.*

3. *Both two weeks ago, and last week, I mentioned what we see here –*

¹⁶ For this reason the Jews persecuted Jesus, and sought to kill Him, because He had done these things on the Sabbath. John 5:16 (NKJV)

A. *I mentioned in passing last week, Numbers 15, here is the passage –*

³² Now while the children of Israel were in the wilderness, they found a man gathering sticks on the Sabbath day. ³³ And those who found him gathering sticks brought him to Moses and Aaron, and to all the congregation. ³⁴ They put him under guard, because it had not been explained what should be done to him. ³⁵ Then the LORD said to Moses, “The man must surely be put to death; all the congregation shall stone him with stones outside the camp.” ³⁶ So, as the LORD commanded Moses, all the congregation brought him outside the camp and stoned him with stones, and he died. Numbers 15:32–36 (NKJV)

B. *This passage and others like it, like Exodus 31:15, took the sabbath and violations of its law against work seriously, they required death –*

¹⁵ Work shall be done for six days, but the seventh is the Sabbath of rest, holy to the LORD. Whoever does any work on the Sabbath day, he shall surely be put to death. Exodus 31:15 (NKJV)

In what we see in Numbers 15 and in Exodus 31, we might at first glance think the Jews who were persecuting Jesus had legal precedent and a legal argument for putting Jesus to death.

II. Jesus' Answer –

¹⁷ But Jesus answered them, ... John 5:17 (NKJV)

¹⁹ Then Jesus answered and said to them, ... John 5:19 (NKJV)

1. *There is something in this passage that is not immediately obvious, for instance, if we went to chapter 6 of this Book of John we would notice –*

¹⁰ Then Jesus **said**, **“Make the people sit down.”** ... John 6:10 (NKJV)

All I want you to notice is a different word, not “said” here in chapter 5 but in verse :17 & in :19 is “Jesus answered” – The Greek word translated “answered” here refers specifically to a formal, legal defense

ἀπεκρίνατο (1 aor. mid.) is found in John only here and at v. 19; ἀπεκρίθη occurring more than 50 times. Abbott points out that while ἀπεκρίθη is the colourless “answered,” ἀπεκρίνατο carries the sense of “made public and formal answer” to a charge or accusation that has been made: “He made His defence,” in reply to the prosecution or persecution of the Jews (ἐδίωκον, v. 16). Cf. οὐδὲν ἀπεκρίνατο (Mk. 14:61, Mt. 27:12 J.H. Bernard

2. *Jesus is making such a legal DEFENSE because He knows the Jews feel / think they have a legal case against Him!*

III. Jesus’ answer, the details, just starting today ...

¹⁷ But Jesus answered them, **“My Father has been working until now, and I have been working.”** John 5:17 (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. 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. John 5:19–21 (NKJV)**

1. *Note, Jesus’ first answer to the Jews accusing Him here is a Son of God answer -*
“My Father has been working until now, and I have been working.”
 - A. *It is not the rightness of healing on the sabbath argument, which He used against them on other occasions ...*
 - B. *It is the God-is-working- so-I-am working argument, because I am God too, as His Son!*
 2. *This the Jews clearly and rightly understand is what Jesus is saying because they are wrongly angry with Him about it –*
- 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. John 5:18 (NKJV)
- A. *These Jewish leaders thought Jesus was a mere man!*
 - B. *As a mere man, at least according to their point of view He is guilty of two sins:*
(B1.) *Breaking the sabbath*
(B2.) *Blasphemy, calling Himself God, making Himself equal with God ...*

3. *Jesus second answer is both argument and evidence –*

A. *He is doing what He sees the father do - :19*

B. *He claims the Father's love for Himself as the reason for both the goodness and the miraculous nature of His (the Son's deed(s)) and claims the will see even greater deeds and marvel. - :20*

C. *Among those greater deeds which He will do, that they will see, He tells them He will raise the dead -*

²¹ For as the Father raises the dead and gives life to them, even so the Son gives life to whom He will. John 5:21 (NKJV)

IV. *What the Jewish leaders were sadly missing and even fighting, the FACT that Jesus was God and Jesus could also do them good –*

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. John 5:20 (NKJV)

What were they missing?

1. *They were missing the loving nature of the Father (God) –*

A. *Here Jesus tells us - ⁰ For the Father loves the Son...*

B. *Earlier in this Book of John Jesus told us – ¹⁶ For God so loved the world John 3:16 (NKJV)*

C. *We know even from the Old Testament that God has Fatherly pity even on sinners –*

¹³ As a father pities his children, So the LORD pities those who fear Him. ¹⁴ For He knows our frame; He remembers that we are dust. Psalm 103:13–14 (NKJV)

Jesus' healing of a man with an infirmity for thirty-eight years, and barely able to move, was an example of such godly pity (mercy) ...

Psalm 136 Repeats, "His mercy endures forever" 26 TIMES!

They would have mercy on animals on the sabbath, but they were missing that mercy to human being could be GOOD –

¹⁵ The Lord then answered him and said, "Hypocrite! Does not each one of you on the Sabbath loose his ox or donkey from the stall, and lead it away to water it? Luke 13:15 (NKJV)

⁵ Then He answered them, saying, "Which of you, having a donkey or an ox that has fallen into a pit, will not immediately pull him out on the Sabbath day?" ⁶ And they could not answer Him regarding these things. Luke 14:5–6 (NKJV)

It was because they were emphasizing the RULES aspect of the Sabbath, they were missing the RELATIONSHIP aspect – Ezekiel 20:20, the God Who gave them the sabbath rules was and is a

merciful God, Who meant the Sabbath to be a BLESSING! Because they did not REALLY KNOW God, they also did not recognize Jesus as His Son –

²³ Thus says the LORD: “Let not the wise *man* glory in his wisdom, Let not the mighty *man* glory in his might, Nor let the rich *man* glory in his riches; ²⁴ But let him who glories glory in this, That he understands and knows Me, That I am the LORD, exercising lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness in the earth. For in these I delight,” says the LORD. Jeremiah 9:23–24 (NKJV)

2. *They were not only missing the love and God-the-Father-like-mercy Jesus displayed, but they also MISSED the marvelous ...*

... and He will show Him greater works than these, that you may marvel. John 5:20 (NKJV)
Meaning Miracles!

- A. *These men were not denying Jesus had performed a miracle, they acknowledge the miracle as FACT*
- B. *They don't acknowledge that the miracle mattered!*

3. *They were missing Jesus' life-giving POWER, because they counted “death” to be power, and they counted death as a POWER because of their SIN –*

²¹ For as the Father raises the dead and gives life to them, even so the Son gives life to whom He will. John 5:21 (NKJV)

1. *Contrast vs :21 with :18 –*

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. John 5:18 (NKJV)

- A. *Killing was their answer, their solution –*

¹² There is a way *that seems* right to a man, but its end *is* the way of death. Proverbs 14:12 (NKJV)

- B. *Later Jesus will raise Lazarus from the dead, their answer to this miracle was the same –*

⁹ Now a great many of the Jews knew that He was there; and they came, not for Jesus' sake only, but that they might also see Lazarus, whom He had raised from the dead. ¹⁰ But the chief priests plotted to put Lazarus to death also, ¹¹ because on account of him many of the Jews went away and believed in Jesus. John 12:9–11 (NKJV)

2. *Death is the wage of sin, and the death penalty for sinners, but it is also the way of the Devil / Satan –*

⁴⁴ You are of your father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own resources, for he is a liar and the father of it. ⁴⁵ But because I tell the truth, you do not believe Me. ⁴⁶ Which of you convicts Me of sin? And if I tell the truth, why do you not believe Me? John 8:44–46 (NKJV)

3. *These men were lost in sin, and so were not seeing the merciful, life-giving, life-saving Son of God! They were self-righteous judges!*

¹⁰ The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly. ¹¹ “I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd gives His life for the sheep. John 10:11 (NKJV)

They did not recognize Jesus because He was different, not a sinner, not unmerciful!