

**“Christ’s Sermon on His Deity”**

John 5:9-24

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Now that day was the Sabbath. 10 So the Jews said to the man who had been healed, "It is the Sabbath, and it is not lawful for you to take up your bed." 11 But he answered them, "The man who healed me, that man said to me, 'Take up your bed, and walk.'" 12 They asked him, "Who is the man who said to you, 'Take up your bed and walk'?" 13 Now the man who had been healed did not know who it was, for Jesus had withdrawn, as there was a crowd in the place. 14 Afterward Jesus found him in the temple and said to him, "See, you are well! Sin no more, that nothing worse may happen to you." 15 The man went away and told the Jews that it was Jesus who had healed him. 16 And this was why the Jews were persecuting Jesus, because he was doing these things on the Sabbath.

17 But Jesus answered them, "My Father is working until now, and I am working." 18 This was why the Jews were seeking all the more to kill him, because not only was he breaking the Sabbath, but he was even calling God his own Father, making himself equal with God.

19 So Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of his own accord, but only what he sees the Father doing. For whatever the Father does, that the Son does likewise. 20 For the Father loves the Son and shows him all that he himself is doing. And greater works than these will he show him, so that you may marvel. 21 For as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, so also the Son gives life to whom he will. 22 The Father judges no one, but has given all judgment to the Son, 23 that all may honor the Son, just as they honor the Father. Whoever does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent him. 24 Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life. He does not come into judgment, but has passed from death to life. ESV

**Who, exactly, is Jesus?**

**Compare your opinion with “Christ’s Sermon on His Deity”**

After Jesus healed a man who had an infirmity for 38 years, the Jewish leaders, instead glorifying God for showing mercy, are **outraged** that Jesus had violated their interpretation of the law of the Sabbath. [John 5:1-16]

**You might want to write this down:**

**God does not do what is right. What God does is right!**

What is the distinction? There is nothing outside of God to which He is accountable, nothing that can sit in judgment on God. Therefore, Jesus, who is the “Lord of the Sabbath,” could not violate any part of the law.

*Matthew 5:17-20*

*"Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill. 18 For assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled.*

**A brief aside: Is there a Sabbath for Christians?**

Yes and No.

No, in the sense of the legalistic Jewish seventh-day Sabbath, which is part of the Old Covenant, which was “nailed to the cross.” [Cf. Colossians 2:11-17]

Yes, in the sense that the Jewish seventh-day Sabbath was replaced in the church by Sunday, the first day of the week, the day of the resurrection of Christ. This Christian “Sabbath” should not be honored in some rigid legalistic way but rather in the spirit of worship.

The **spirit** of the OT Sabbath has not been made void any more than has the **spirit** of the law of adultery and murder. The church has been given ample instruction in the NT on the need assemble and worship in the spirit of the Sabbath; to rest and to remember our Creator!

The answer that Jesus gave in John 5:17 clearly allows for works of necessity.

There is not much danger in our day of being too strict about the “Sabbath.”

Far too many people who profess to be Christian have meeting with the church as a low priority on their “to do” list for Sunday.

Back to the exposition of John 5:

After healing the impotent man what Jesus says brings Him into intentional conflict with the Jews. What Jesus preached here was as much the purpose of God as what happened with Nicodemus; with the woman at the well; and on the two thieves that were crucified with Jesus.

Paul wrote that preaching the Gospel had a twofold purpose.

Listen very carefully.

This is one of the most solemn passages anywhere in the Bible.

*2 Corinthians 2:14-17*

*14 Now thanks be to God who always leads us in triumph in Christ, and through us diffuses the fragrance of His knowledge in every place. 15 For we are to God the fragrance of Christ among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing. 16 To the one we are the aroma of death leading to death, and to the other the aroma of life leading to life. And who is sufficient for these things? 17 For we are not, as so many, peddling the word of God; but as of sincerity, but as from God, we speak in the sight of God in Christ.*

What is Paul teaching in this passage?

The **first** thing Paul is teaching is that the preaching of the Gospel is never a failure! The **second** thing is that the preaching of the Gospel can result in a person being saved or in their being sealed in their condemnation!

No preacher that I know of wants to be a messenger of condemnation. All that preachers are charged to do is to preach the Gospel and leave the results up to God.

Much of the “success” we are seeing today with the large crowds who have not responded to the Gospel, but to an appeal to the flesh may be for their condemnation.

Jesus said there was a “broad road that leads to destruction”! Can anyone point to that broad road? It seems that everyone is okay no matter what they have based their “decision” on.

And so contrary to the most popular teaching today about the mission of Jesus to the Jews, **He did not fail** because they rejected Him as the Messiah!

What the Romans and the Jewish leaders did in their treatment of Jesus was in the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God! [Acts 2:22-41]

You will see the relevance of my comments [D.V.] regarding the fact that Jesus in no sense failed when we deal with verses 24-30.

*16 For this reason the Jews persecuted Jesus, and sought to kill Him, because He had done these things on the Sabbath.*

*17 But Jesus answered them, "My Father has been working until now, and I have been working."*

*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.*

### **The equality that Jesus claims with God the Father is absolute!**

The Father and the Son are engaged in a single purpose. Be it the sustaining of the physical creation, or in the salvation of sinners, the Father and the Son do “work” on the Sabbath.

*"My Father has been working until now, and I have been working."*

“This verse [17] opens up the entire theology of the person of Christ ...”

“He who came to fulfill Isaiah’s greatest prophecy, **“Behold your God!”** [Isaiah 40:9], had reached the point in His short earthly ministry of three and a half years when He must present Himself as **“Emanuel, God with us,”** in language which would bear no other interpretation.” Charles D. Alexander

The words Jesus spoke were precisely intended to have the effect they did.

So disabuse yourself of any notion that Jesus failed when the Jews rejected Him as Messiah!

Christ's sermon on His **deity** begins in verse 19 with one of those double Amen's, which is peculiar to the Gospel of John.

**Amen, amen!** [Verily, verily! Truly, truly! Most assuredly!]

The primary work of a Bible teacher is to explain the Bible. Some of you have been studying the Bible for longer than the 46 years that I have. But some of you are just beginning to search the Scriptures. So when I tell you something that is very basic, those of you who are more mature will please bear with me for the sake of those who are just beginning serious Bible study.

The same is true of repetition. Do I use too much repetition? Only if you can remember everything that I preach. A long time ago I learned that most people only retain about 10 percent of what they hear. So if you hear me teach something about ten times you might possibly remember it.

What does the **deity of Christ** mean? Is that too basic a question?

The Man who is called in the Scriptures "Jesus of Nazareth" is the Word [Logos: wisdom, logic, expression, communication] John 1:1, 14. The Word is God! The Word became flesh and dwelt among us. What that means is that Jesus Christ is the eternal Son of God and is equal with God the Father and God the Holy Spirit. Jesus of Nazareth is the Christ and He is the second person of the Holy Trinity.

That is what the "**deity**" of Christ means! **Jesus is God!**

And that is precisely what the Jews understood Jesus to be saying about Himself and that is why they were outraged at Him and plotted to kill Him.

Augustine says, "The Jews understood what the Arians would not understand." [The Jehovah's Witness cult is the modern expression of Arianism.]

How can any preacher, who is only a sinner saved by grace, express the majesty of what John has recorded in Jesus' sermon on His deity?  
Yet I must make my attempt and it is for you to pray that the Holy Spirit will be our Teacher today.

There is nothing anywhere else in Scripture that expresses the **deity** of Christ, as does this passage in Chapter 5:

Let's take a look at verses 19-23.

*John 5:19-23*

*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. 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.*

**“Amen, amen!”**

Every part of Scripture is important. However, the “double amen” is to call attention to something that is of utmost importance. E.g., **“Amen, amen! I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God.”**

John 3:3

There are three double amen's in Jesus' sermon on His deity in John 5. The first double amen is in verse 19.

*19 Then Jesus answered and said to them, "Amen, amen, [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.*

What Jesus does is not simply something “similar” to what the Father does, what Jesus does is exactly what the Father does!

Recall that you have been taught not to say that something is “like” God. There is nothing “like” God except God!

In verse 19, the Lord claims that all His acts are directly from the Divine mind, wisdom, will, and purpose.

When Jesus says that, “the Son can do nothing of Himself,” it is not because of **inferiority**. What this teaches is the **interdependence** of the Father and the Son.

The essence of sin is the desire to be **independent** from God! Satan's fall from heaven and Adam's first sin was to be independent from God!

Your sin and my sin is an attempt to be **independent** from God. God commands us not to commit adultery and then we watch TV and movies and vicariously participate in illicit sex. Now don't break God's commandment against lying by denying that you ever have impure thoughts.

The ultimate torment in hell for the **impenitent** will be in the knowledge that sin is rebellion against love! **"For God so loved ..."** John 3:16

"Hell itself is truth known too late." J.C. Ryle

Abraham said to the rich man who was in torment in hell,  
"Son remember..." [Luke 16:25]

Rolf Barnard, an evangelist back in the 1960's,  
referred to the phrase, "Son remember," as "God's bloodhound".

Souls in hell will remember every time they rejected the free offer of the Gospel to repent and believe. Souls in hell who never heard of Jesus Christ will remember every time they held down the knowledge of the divine nature seen in the created universe. [Romans 1:18-23]

Impenitent sinners love their sin more than they want God's mercy.

Impenitent sinners want to be independent from God.

But this is not so with the Lord Jesus Christ.

Jesus always does the will of His Father. There is the **interdependence** of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.

In the Holy Trinity there is a divine order. God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit are **interdependent**. The Son submits to the will of the Father and the Holy Spirit reveals the truth about the Son.

There is no conflict of wills. The three persons of the Holy Trinity are mutually **interdependent** in glorious unity. There is one mind, one will, one purpose, one power, and one glory.

Thus the Son of God says:

*"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.*

**“For the Father loves the Son...”**

This means that there is nothing reserved by the Father in wisdom and knowledge that is not given to the Son.

**The One who knows everything that the Father knows is Himself God.**

We must regulate our understanding by the divine order of things. If it is true that God loves you, then infinitely beyond God’s love for sinners, is that **“The Father loves the Son!”**

Whatever grace you may freely receive, flows from the love of the Father for the Son. There is no **redeeming love** of God apart from Jesus Christ!

**“The Father loves the Son!”**

The “greater works” that exceed the miracles performed at Cana and Bethesda can only refer to the work of redemption by which spiritually dead sinners are raised to life in Christ. This explains the next verse.

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

Elijah, Elisha, Peter, and Paul participated in raising the physically dead. But they did not raise whom they would. They only raised those whom the sovereign Christ determined would be raised from the dead.

But this verse goes beyond raising the physical dead.

Jesus says that He determines who will be given eternal life and who will be passed over to remain forever under the wrath of God.



If any of today's popular preachers should ever grasp the truth that it is Jesus who determines who will be saved they will not have much patience for what passes for "evangelism" in our day. Perhaps there would not be so many souls on the "broad road that leads to destruction."

### **Jesus is not a beggar!**

I am convinced that God is blasphemed when He is presented as "trying" to save a sinner but He cannot do so without the sinner giving Him permission!

We are **commanded** to repent and to believe in the Gospel!

But my dear sinner you are not in control of whether or not Jesus will save you. And I will be so bold as to say that if you have faith in your "decision", believing that you were in any way the cause of your being saved, you are still "dead in trespasses and sins."

Is it even possible for us to imagine what this next claim of Jesus did to the minds of those who were already outraged at Jesus?

*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.*

God the Father works through the Son!

The Son has **complete knowledge** of everything that the Father knows!

The Father **loves the Son!**

The Son is **sovereign** over the gift of eternal life!

And now Jesus says that all **judgment** is committed to the Son!

Jesus continues with one statement after another to show His being equal with God the Father.

So as to **judgment**, the Father never acts independently in judgment.

One of the marks of our postmodern culture is that you make no moral judgment! Our children are being taught that there is no absolute right or wrong. And it is not only our children. If you are learning at the “feet of Oprah and Dr. Phil” you too are being indoctrinated with New Age psychobabble

There is the righteous judgment of God and Jesus is the Judge!

It is patently unscriptural to present the Father as Judge with the Son interceding to change the Father’s mind.

The notion that God the Father is wrath and God the Son pleads with the Father to have mercy on sinners is to deny what verse 22 says.

The **intercession** of the Son is for His people that the Father gave to Him. Jesus pleads His own blood as propitiation for sin in perfect harmony with the will of the Father and is never in any way contrary to the Father’s will.  
[Romans 8:31-34]

The reason we are given, that all judgment is committed to the Son, is in order that all may honor the Son even as they honor the Father.

*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.*

The Father has given to Christ His eternal honor and throne. This expresses the totality of all that the Father is. To bestow all this upon another requires that the “other” be equal with God, co-eternal with God the Father. Only Jesus Christ, the Son of God, can properly be said to hold this honor.

All who claim to honor God and yet reject the exclusive claims of Jesus Christ are condemned by their own words.

The Jehovah’s Witness who denies that Jesus is God cannot honor God!

The Mormon who has invented another “Jesus” cannot honor God!

The Muslim who claims to honor Allah and rejects Jesus as deity cannot honor God!

The Jew who claims to honor Jehovah and rejects Jesus, as the Messiah cannot honor God!

The Roman Catholic who claims to honor the Father but makes Mary co-redemptrix rejects the exclusive claims of Jesus and cannot honor God!

Any other religious group that adds baptism or church affiliation to the redeeming blood of Christ cannot honor God!

The Postmodern pluralist who says that all religions are equally valid dishonors Jesus and cannot honor God!

**There are no exceptions!**

Neither race, nor genealogy, nor orthodoxy, nor intellect, will provide a shelter from the fiery indignation of the wrath of God and the Lamb

Does what I just said offend you because of family and friends?

If you know someone who holds to these beliefs that dishonor Christ you are not their friend if you refuse to warn them. I am only being true to your soul. And you must be true to their soul.

The claims of Jesus are absolute and there can be no compromise!

*He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent Him.*

And you cannot honor the Son by refusing to accept everything that He says about Himself!

Has the Holy Spirit revealed the true Jesus to you?

Jim Gunn  
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