

John 5:1 After this there was a feast of the Jews; and Jesus went up to Jerusalem.

John 5:2 Now there is at Jerusalem by the sheep *market* a pool, which is called in the Hebrew tongue Bethesda, having five porches.

John 5:3 In these lay a great multitude of impotent folk, of blind, halt, withered, waiting for the moving of the water.

John 5:4 For an angel went down at a certain season into the pool, and troubled the water: whosoever then first after the troubling of the water stepped in was made whole of whatsoever disease he had.

Another time came when Jesus went to Jerusalem for one of the Jewish feasts. Near the sheep market was a pool of water called Bethesda that was surrounded by five porches. The water of the pool was believed to have healing powers that would heal the first one in after/during a disturbance of the water. So many people who were disabled (blind, lame, paralyzed...) would lie close by and wait for the water to be moved. John then confirms that an angel did come at certain times to move the waters and provide healing for the first person in after the angel moved the waters.

John 5:5 And a certain man was there, which had an infirmity thirty and eight years.

John 5:6 When Jesus saw him lie, and knew that he had been now a long time *in that case*, he saith unto him, Wilt thou be made whole?

John 5:7 The impotent man answered him, Sir, I have no man, when the water is troubled, to put me into the pool: but while I am coming, another steppeth down before me.

One man who frequented the pool had been an invalid for 38 years. When Jesus saw him on this trip to Jerusalem, Jesus asked the man if he wanted to get well. The man explained that someone always got into the water first since he had no one to help him get in.

Significant note: Jesus asked, "Will you?" The man answered not "Will you?" but why he could not. This just reminded me of how quick we are with excuses.

Interesting note from George Salstrand:

- 1) He was sick.
- 2) He was helpless
 - a) He cannot work for his salvation.
 - b) He cannot be saved by keeping the law.
 - c) He has no standing.
- 3) He was hopeless.
- 4) He was friendless.

John 5:8 Jesus saith unto him, Rise, take up thy bed, and walk.

John 5:9 And immediately the man was made whole, and took up his bed, and walked: and on the same day was the sabbath.

Jesus knew the man's desire. He told him to pick up his bed and walk—which the man did immediately. He was cured and made whole. When God gives a command, the results are immediate. Science goes out the window. The Creator of the laws of science can override them at will.

John 5:10 The Jews therefore said unto him that was cured, It is the sabbath day: it is not lawful for thee to carry *thy* bed.

John 5:11 He answered them, He that made me whole, the same said unto me, Take up thy bed, and walk.

John 5:12 Then asked they him, What man is that which said unto thee, Take up thy bed, and walk?

John 5:13 And he that was healed wist not who it was: for Jesus had conveyed himself away, a multitude being in *that* place.

The day the man was healed just happened to be the Sabbath, so he was breaking the law by carrying his mat. When confronted by "the Jews," the religious leaders, he told them what had happened. Then they wanted to know who the man was that had told him what to do.

When the Jews were quoting the law regarding the carrying of his mat, they were quoting the Mishna, a commentary on the law by the rabbis--in other words, man's interpretation of God's word. That is why I always search for myself before resorting to commentaries for further enlightenment or to "jump start" my thinking. Our ultimate understanding of scripture should come from the Word through the teaching of the Holy Spirit and not from men.

Acts 17:11 "These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so."

This man had been lying around that pool a long time—maybe not 38 years, but I bet a big portion of that time. Surely some of these people recognized him. Even if they didn't—after hearing his story, you would have thought that they would have been excited that he was healed. "The Jews" had to be the Pharisees since they were the ones obsessed with the law and their perfection at keeping it. Were they happy for the man? No. They just wanted to find the culprit who had caused him to break the law. The man couldn't point out Jesus since He had disappeared in the crowd.

John 5:14 Afterward Jesus findeth him in the temple, and said unto him, Behold, thou art made whole: sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee.

John 5:15 The man departed, and told the Jews that it was Jesus, which had made him whole.

A little later Jesus looked for and found the man at the temple and spoke to him. He told the man to stop sinning or something worse might happen to him. We all know that this man could hardly have been capable of what we would call big sins. He had been an invalid for 38 years. But Jesus can look straight into the core of our being. He knows our thoughts and intentions.

I know at times I've been complacent or comfortable with the fact that there are no major sins dominating my life. That's the problem. We put sin in different categories. Then when we make a comparison to our lives, we figure we are OK. But the real core of our being is just as dirty as the most flagrant sinner's. How many sins do we commit by not doing what we know to be right? Given choices in our lives—how many times do we make the better choice? In fact, do we even recognize that we are making choices that affect our relationship to God—sometimes minute by minute, often hour by hour, and definitely day by day? When we sit down to watch that TV show—is it our best choice or even a good choice? When we decide we need that new outfit? That extra few hours of sleep? I'm not saying that any of those things are wrong in themselves—but sometimes they are wrong choices because of our motives or because they result in lost opportunities for service or worship.

Back to the story—Jesus saw through this man. Was he even grateful for the miracle that had been performed in his life? It's like he couldn't wait to find the Jews who had questioned him and identify Jesus as the culprit who had healed him (and caused him to break the law). Why did he feel so compelled to answer to these Jews? Was he angry that Jesus had identified the fact that there was sin in his life?

As I continue to think on these verses, I realize that Jesus is making a statement that sin is one of the reasons for the afflictions we suffer in life. It doesn't mean that it is the reason—just that it can be.

John 5:16 And therefore did the Jews persecute Jesus, and sought to slay him, because he had done these things on the sabbath day.

John 5:17 But Jesus answered them, My Father worketh hitherto, and I work.

John 5:18 Therefore the Jews sought the more to kill him, because he not only had broken the sabbath, but said also that God was his Father, making himself equal with God.

Well, the Jews didn't care that He was doing wonderful things for the people—they just cared that He was doing it on the Sabbath. So they persecuted Jesus; they even wanted to kill Him. Jesus responded by telling them that His Father is always at His work, and He would do the same. This really infuriated the Jews because they understood completely that He was saying that God was His Father and that He was equating His position with that of God. They really wanted to kill him.

“My Father worketh” – The Believer's Bible Commentary, by William MacDonald, had a very thought-provoking statement.

“Having finished the work of creation in six days, God had rested on the seventh day. This was the Sabbath. However, when sin entered the world, God's rest was disturbed. He would now work ceaselessly to bring men and women back into fellowship with Himself.”

In my study of Hebrews, I came across the following grammatical explanation by Kenneth Wuest in his Word Studies in the Greek New Testament: “The word *idios* speaks not merely of ownership, but of a personal, private unique ownership. For instance, John in his gospel states the fact that the Jews tried to kill our Lord because He had said that God was His personal, unique Father. Had John used *autos*, there would have been no justification for their accusation, for each one of these Jews claimed God as his Father. John used *idios*, reporting the Lord Jesus as saying that God was His private, unique Father. God was His Father in a different sense from that in which He might be the Father of others. Our Lord claimed unique Sonship, and, therefore, Deity. And these Jews recognized that fact.”

John 5:19 Then answered Jesus and said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do: for what things soever he doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise.

Jesus basically tells them that He is imitating the Father, because the Son “*can do nothing of Himself, but what He seeth the Father do.*” Seems like there is a huge truth principle in that statement for all fathers to recognize (and mothers for that matter). Your example is the most important influence in the lives of your sons (children).

I think the key truth here is that Jesus always acts according to the actions of His Father.

John 5:20 For the Father loveth the Son, and sheweth him all things that himself doeth: and he will shew him greater works than these, that ye may marvel.

Then Jesus declares His faith/confidence in His Father’s love for Him. God the Father loves His Son so much that He shows Him all He does—He hides nothing from Him. In fact, they would see Him do even greater things in the future as evidence of this.

A good father has no reason to hide any of His actions. His life should be an open book to his sons (children). I think this is being said at the level of understanding of the listener. Jesus is going to do much greater things than healing the sick. He will raise the dead, and He Himself will be resurrected from the grave—which leads directly to the next verse.

John 5:21 For as the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth *them*; even so the Son quickeneth whom he will.

Jesus then makes a statement regarding God’s power over life and death. Then He adds that the Son (Jesus) “quickeneth” (gives life) to whom He wills (His choice, His pleasure). We already know that He is not willing that any should perish, and He wants to and will give it to all who believe in Him (3:16).

This appears to be a confirmation that Jesus is addressing the Pharisees since they believed in resurrection. They knew it was a work of God. Now Jesus is saying that He has the same power. I think His reference to “quicken” is a reference to giving spiritual life, even though He could obviously restore physical life as well—as is demonstrated later in this gospel.

John 5:22 For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son:

“judgeth” = condemn, punish, damn

Then Jesus states that the Father has “*committed all judgment unto the Son.*” The Father judges no one. The Father and Son are part of a triune God; therefore, what one does, the other does. Yet, we know that they are also separate in certain capacities since it was Jesus who was crucified—not the Father. Since I am really a simple person, the story of the apple still helps, but it doesn’t really quench my desire to fully understand. (The apple has a peel, the fleshy fruit, and the core—yet it is one apple. You can separate the different parts, but it doesn’t change the fact that it is one apple.)

In more recent times I have come to view the married couple as a better example. God looks at two different people and considers them one flesh. The biggest problem with this example is that man has corrupted it. The unity of God is inseparable.

John 5:23 That all *men* should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father. He that honoureth not the Son honoureth not the Father which hath sent him.

John 5:24 Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.

John 5:25 Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live.

John 5:26 For as the Father hath life in himself; so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself;

John 5:27 And hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man.

Jesus then tells us the reason that the Father gave Him the right to judge was so that “*all men should honor the Son, even as they honor the Father.*” The Jewish people as a whole had/has never really doubted the existence of God or the fact that He deserves to be honored and worshipped. Since they were refusing (as a whole) to accept the Son, Jesus, as the promised Messiah, and He was to give His life in order to give them the opportunity for eternal life, it was only right that He be given the position of judge—and they would be forced to recognize Him in the end.

Jesus goes on to emphasize that to dishonor the Son is also to dishonor the Father who sent Him. This is another puzzle. We know that Jesus was a “willing” sacrifice for our sin, but His main motivation or desire in that act of sacrifice was to obey His Father. Remember—when He prayed in the garden, it was “not my

will, but Thine.” His Father had sent Him to earth. This theme is continued all the way through verse 30 with different emphases.

“Verily, verily” – This is the truth; you can bank on it. Any person that hears the truth that Jesus is presenting and believes that God has sent Him as the Messiah has eternal life and will not come into condemnation (will not face judgment for his sin). He has been given a new life in Christ. He has been born again—experienced spiritual rebirth.

Verse 25 is a promise of resurrection for the believer. Again it is introduced as a truth that you can depend on. Those who die believing in God’s promise/provision will come up from the grave to enjoy eternal life in the presence of God. As I continue to think on this verse, I believe “the dead” is referencing all who are spiritually dead. “They that hear” references those who embrace the truth of Jesus and the salvation He offers. They will inherit true life—eternal life.

Verse 26 tells us that the “Father hath life in Himself.” He has also granted that privilege to the Son. My simple logic tells me that if they are both one; that would have been natural—not a privilege to be granted. It’s a problem with truly understanding the Trinity again. The BIG truth here is God/Jesus as the source of life—it is in Him. The Son is also given the privilege to judge man because He is the perfect man through whom man will find redemption.

John 5:28 Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice,
John 5:29 And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.

Jesus realizes that these truths are amazing to the finite human mind. He emphasizes that those who have done good will be resurrected to eternal life in the presence of God, and those who have done evil will be resurrected to “damnation.” That time of resurrection “is coming”—is yet future.

I think this refers back to 3:21 when we are told that “evil hates the light” and whoever lives by the truth comes into light so that it may be plainly seen that what he has done has been done through God. We cannot do “good” except through God. God works through us as we put our faith in Him. He can and does use any vessel He chooses to accomplish His purposes (whether the vessel be willing or unwilling). I think the more important truth is that He is always working on/in/through willing vessels.

John 5:30 I can of mine own self do nothing: as I hear, I judge: and my judgment is just; because I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me.

This passage has made it clear that the workings of the Son and the Father are separate—yet the same. I guess I look at the Father as the source or root of a

triune God with three distinct personalities. So, without the Father, the Son can do nothing.

Jesus was a man who lived through the leading and empowerment of the Holy Spirit—just as we were created to do and as new creations “in Christ” are empowered to do. As a Spirit-filled man, we are limited only by our lack of faith. Without the Spirit, we are doomed to failure as to all things spiritual.

“as I hear, I judge” – My God is “all seeing,” “all knowing,” and “everywhere present.” Even though I understand what I just said, I don’t understand how that can be. So for Jesus to say He judges as He hears is confusing. Since this is the Son in flesh as man, maybe He is talking of judgments made while here on earth where He did have self-imposed limitations as a human and was dependent on the Father/Spirit for revelation.

“my judgment is just” – This is a statement of fact with no room for exceptions.

“because I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which sent me.” – I think this is an emphasis on His commitment to obey His Father. He also recognizes His feelings as a man—that part of Him would have led Him to fall short of perfection if His focus and commitment to His Father had not been firm. He exemplified the faith that He wants us to have in Him.

John 5:31 If I bear witness of myself, my witness is not true.

John 5:32 There is another that beareth witness of me; and I know that the witness which he witnesseth of me is true.

John 5:33 Ye sent unto John, and he bare witness unto the truth.

John 5:34 But I receive not testimony from man: but these things I say, that ye might be saved.

John 5:35 He was a burning and a shining light: and ye were willing for a season to rejoice in his light.

Jesus doesn’t let up in this section. The truths are hard. He begins to talk about testimonies about who He is. I missed the word “if” several times at the start of verse 31. Again, He is talking as a man to men, so testimony about Himself wouldn’t be valid. That really doesn’t matter, because He has another witness to the truth of His identity. Yes, John the Baptist had verified the truth about Jesus. (John 1:19 indicates that they thought John was a prophet.) John had served well and been a strong light for many, and many had chosen to believe John’s message.

“these things I say...” – Jesus was diligent to present Himself as the Son of God with power over life and death because of His desire for men to be saved. He knew that their only hope for eternal life was dependent on their faith in Him as proved by His actions in submission to the will of the Father. They had to believe His message as the truth of God.

I looked at the Greek for the word “light” in verse 35 this time through, and it referenced “a portable lamp, or candle.” A lamp or candle burns at the

discretion of the one using it. John was a *light* that was chosen and empowered by the Creator; Jesus embodied the original source of light and power.

“for a season” – Until it threatened or interfered with their way of life.

John 5:36 But I have greater witness than *that* of John: for the works which the Father hath given me to finish, the same works that I do, bear witness of me, that the Father hath sent me.

John 5:37 And the Father himself, which hath sent me, hath borne witness of me. Ye have neither heard his voice at any time, nor seen his shape.

John 5:38 And ye have not his word abiding in you: for whom he hath sent, him ye believe not.

John 5:39 Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me.

John 5:40 And ye will not come to me, that ye might have life.

Now they should understand that there is an even more dependable witness to His identity. They should realize that the works Jesus was doing were proof that He was sent from the Father. The scripture was clear about the works that would accompany the coming of God—works that identify Jesus with God.

Isaiah 35:4-6 “Say to them that are of a fearful heart, Be strong, fear not: behold, your God will come with vengeance, even God with a recompence; he will come and save you. Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing: for in the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert.

Isaiah 61:1 “The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me; because the LORD hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound....”

The Father testified about Him—but none of them had ever seen or heard God in person, neither did they believe His Messenger. They were giving the scripture more reverence than the Son. Even though these very scriptures tell about eternal life through the Son, the Messiah, they still didn’t believe it was He to whom they referred.

“search the scriptures...” – Jesus was very quick to encourage the study of the scripture. He knew that the scripture was full of testimony about Him. We see much more clearly from our perspective than did the Jews of that time. As is so often the case, expectation clouded their judgment. They were looking for a king (a king according to their own expectations), not the Messiah described in the scripture as a simple man that would be rejected and suffer death to deliver man from sin (cf Isaiah 53).

John 5:41 I receive not honour from men.

John 5:42 But I know you, that ye have not the love of God in you.

In these verses Jesus lets them know that He knows them—He can see what is in their hearts. He knew that the love of God was missing in their lives. They were much more concerned about the letter of the law than the intent of the law. This was proved over and over again in their responses to Jesus healing on the Sabbath. I think He is saying that they are rejecting Him because even though He is telling them that He is the Messiah, He did not fulfill their expectation of the Messiah.

John 5:43 I am come in my Father's name, and ye receive me not: if another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive.

John 5:44 How can ye believe, which receive honour one of another, and seek not the honour that cometh from God only?

If another person comes to them on his own merits, not as the Son of God, they would be quick to accept him. I think this references false teachers in general—but especially the Antichrist of the tribulation period.

1John 2:18 "Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time."

2Thessalonians 2:8-11 "And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming: Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie...."

They thrived on praise from one another; pride was their dominant character trait. They were more concerned about praise from their peers than praise from God. With that kind of attitude, how could they ever hope to believe the truth—they would never recognize it.

In reading through this section again, it hit me that the Antichrist will be accepted because he will present himself as the King/Deliverer they expect. He won't claim sonship; he will claim to be God.

John 5:45 Do not think that I will accuse you to the Father: there is one that accuseth you, even Moses, in whom ye trust.

John 5:46 For had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me: for he wrote of me.

John 5:47 But if ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe my words?

They claimed to base their lives on the law of Moses—and that would be the basis of their being judged. He tells them that if they really believed Moses, they would believe Him, because Moses wrote about Him. They claimed to believe Moses, yet when the law was fulfilled and the predicted Messiah was with them, they refused to believe. (I think this was because of their presupposition as to how He would come and what He would be like; Jesus just didn't fit.) If they

didn't believe Moses, what were their chances of ever believing His message of salvation.

The writings of Moses are full of types/examples regarding the Messiah. The tabernacle and all its functions were established to reveal the plan of redemption. The promise of the Messiah was first given in Genesis 3:15. I think the hearts of these men were so puffed up in pride that they really didn't want to see Messiah. They enjoyed their positions of authority.

Genesis 3:15 "And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel."