

# Notes for the Ones Called-Out to Meet

Info: (651) 283-0568 Discipleship Training Ministries, Inc. www.dtminc.org Today's Date: December 4, 2016

## Jesus' Defense for Healing on Sabbath and Calling God His Father

by Dan Trygg

“For this cause therefore the Jews were seeking all the more to kill Him, because He not only was breaking the Sabbath, but also was calling God His own Father, making Himself equal with God. <sup>19</sup> Jesus therefore answered and was saying to them, ‘Truly, truly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of Himself, unless it is something He sees the Father doing; for whatever the Father does, these things the Son also does in like manner. <sup>20</sup> For the Father loves the Son, and shows Him all things that He Himself is doing; and greater works than these will He show Him, that you may marvel. <sup>21</sup> For just as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, even so the Son also gives life to whom He wishes. <sup>22</sup> For not even the Father judges anyone, but He has given all judgment to the Son, <sup>23</sup> in order that all may honor the Son, even as they honor the Father. He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent Him.”

John 5:18-23

**Some people say that Jesus never really claimed to be God.** They insist that the Church has read this interpretation into Jesus' words, but that He never actually meant to be understood that way at all. John 5 is one passage that would clearly give such people some difficulty attempting to reconcile Jesus' words with their theory. This chapter contains a clear example of what I refer to as an **“unequivocal claim”**. **We can see by the reaction of the leaders how they understood Jesus' words.** Since they shared a common language, culture, and religious heritage, we could expect that the original hearers of Jesus' words would have a better understanding of what they would mean in that cultural setting. Their judgment of His statement was, **“...they were seeking all the more to kill Him, because He was ...calling God His own Father, making Himself equal with God”** (vs. 18).

**The remainder of the chapter is a record of Jesus' further explanation of what He meant by what He said.** Verse 19 plainly states, “Jesus therefore answered and was saying to them”. **The critics would hope to find some retraction, modification, or clarification of His offending statement.** If He were intending to back off or soften His claim, we would expect Him to do so at *this* juncture. **Instead, the Lord only more clearly and plainly reinforces the offensive claim!** He distances Himself from normal humanity, and claims to have authority and responsibility that in the Jewish mind of that time belonged only to God. **At the same time that he firmly establishes His uniqueness as the Son of God, He also clearly reveals to us His *modus operandi*. He does not do anything on His own initiative or authority, but does what He sees the Father doing** (vss. 19,30). Even though He is equal to the Father, He makes clear that He is following the Father's initiatives and directions.

**Jesus begins with a solemn statement formula, “Truly, truly, I say to you...”** Instead of wanting to turn attention *away from* Himself, He basically calls further attention *to Himself*. “Listen up! I am going to say something important!” “...the Son can do *nothing* from Himself, unless it is something He sees the Father doing.” **Jesus is saying that He cannot just go around doing miracles on His own. He only is able to do what He sees the Father already doing.** He is stating that God was the initiator of this miracle, not Him. Jesus states what should have been obvious. **The healing of the man by the pool was an act of God. If God chose to do that on the Sabbath, that was His choice.** “...for whatever the Father does, these things the Son also does in like manner.” The previous phrase was the *negative statement of this principle*, ...namely that He *cannot do* what the Father *might not be doing*. Now He states it *positively*. **What He sees the Father doing, He engages in it to join with Him in a corresponding way. He has made it His business to act on what He sees the Father initiating.**

**“For the Father loves the Son, and shows Him all things that He Himself is doing”** (vs. 20). This would have been a little offensive to Jesus' listeners. The Jews did not often speak of God as “Father”. That was thought of as “too familiar”, bordering on irreverent, in their minds. **The word for “loves” is from the Greek word *phileō*, meaning they have a relationship of affection and friendship. Jesus is not describing an attitude of distant benevolence, but a mutual intimacy and closeness.** (How do you suppose the religious leaders felt about *this*? Interestingly, Jesus says that God feels the *same way* about those who trust in and have affection for Jesus – Jn. 16:27.) **The word for “shows” also means to “point out, draw attention to, or cause to see”. God's activity was somehow communicated or revealed to Jesus by the Father.** (Since He also loves *us*, should we not expect the same?) Furthermore, God intends to *amaze* and *overwhelm* them by the miraculous signs He will do through Jesus. **They ain't seen nothing, yet!**

Verse 21 begins with “For just as...” **Watch the comparisons that Jesus makes between His Father and Himself. What would you think of someone making statements like this? Can there be any question of the magnitude of what Jesus is claiming? (1.) Just as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, ...even so the Son also gives**

*life to whom He wishes.* The Son also “makes alive” or quickens people. The Greek does not support the idea of “giving life to”, as though He was giving a commodity to someone. Rather, He “makes alive” the people *themselves*.

(2.) *For neither does the Father judge anyone... rather He has given all judgment to the Son* (vs. 22). This is a new and very radical statement. **The OT characterized God as the Judge of all** (Gen. 18:25; Isa. 2:4; Jer. 25:31; Joel 3:2,12-14). There was some precedent that the Messiah would also judge (Cf. Isa. 11:1-4; 16:5), but **to say that God would not judge anyone, ...and beyond that to claim that He, the Son, would be the Judge of all..., was to make an incredible claim** (cf. Acts 10:42; 17:30,31; II Tim. 4:1)!

The next verse begins with a purpose clause (“*in order that*”) to indicate the reason *why* God has given all judgment to Jesus. (3.) *All may honor the Son, even as they honor the Father -- The purpose: to cause people to honor, value, and esteem the Son.* The *extent* of this honor is literally, “*according as*”, or “*to the degree that*”, they honor the Father. **Here, Jesus stated that there should be equality in respect and devotion toward Him and His Father. He explicitly states what the Jews had been afraid He was implying** (cf. vs. 18). (4.) *He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent Him.* Not only *should* people honor the Son; if they do *not*, they *dishonor* God the Father, because He sent Him. There is no escape, no excuses. **Jesus is altogether as important as God.**

We have another solemn statement formula in vs. 24: “**Truly, truly, I say to you...**” “**The one hearing My word and believing in the One having sent Me, has eternal life...**” (Note, hearing brings *information, knowledge*. That is *not* enough. There must be *faith*, a *choice-to-trust* in that knowledge.) Again, it is Jesus’ word, ...but His word as the One sent from God. (5.) *Jesus claims a unique authority as a Teacher sent from God.* If there was any question about who this Son that Jesus keeps referring to might be, His use of the personal pronoun, “My”, removes any doubt. Jesus is saying that *if you listen to what He has to say, accept His teachings as being from God, and trust in those teachings, then “age-type” life* (life of the age to come, the kingdom of God) *becomes yours.* You *have* it. It is your *current possession*. **Eternal life begins now. It is not just a future inheritance of those who persevere in faith; it is a dynamic that is introduced into our lives at the moment we believe.** “...and he does not come into judgment, but has passed out of death into life” -- The original language uses a strong negative contrast, “...he *does not...*, rather he/she has crossed over out from the death into the life”. **The verb is in a tense that means that the person crossed over at a point in time and this has ongoing effect, i.e., they remain “crossed over”.** A one-time decision that produces ongoing effect. Think of the impact of these words on those listening to Him!

Another “solemn statement formula” in verse 25 indicates a change in the subject. “Truly, truly...” -- Again, pay attention! “...the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God...” If it were not enough to claim to be the judge of mankind, (6.) *Jesus now also claims to even have a part in the resurrection of the dead.* The “*now is*” in vs. 25 probably refers to people who are spiritually dead coming to spiritual life through believing Jesus’ teaching. **It is clear that vs. 28,29, however, are referring to the resurrection of the dead at the end of the age** (Dan. 12:1,2). The fact that some will rise to life, and others to a resurrection of judgment, identifies this resurrection as *the second resurrection* of Revelation 20:11-15, since none of those who are participants in *the first resurrection* will experience the judgment of the second death (Rev. 20:4-6). This is the first time Jesus called Himself “the Son of God” (cf. 10:36).

In verse 26, we have another comparison with the Father: “... *just as... even so...*” (7.) **Jesus claims to have life entirely “in Himself”.** He could give life to others, because God had granted Him to have life within Himself.

**God gave Him authority to execute judgment, because He is “a son of Man”** (5:27). The “He gave” language here, and in the previous verse, remind us again that Jesus claimed to be responding to the Father’s initiative, not “taking things” for Himself. *the Son of Man* -- The Greek has no “the”, therefore it should be translated as “a son of man”, i.e., human. **The fact that He was a son of man meant that He would be able to judge with understanding and compassion, having experienced the weaknesses and pressures of human existence** (Heb. 2:17,18; 4:14-16). Note that He is **both Son of God** (vs. 25) **and son of man**, ...the mystery of the incarnation (Jn. 1:14). Both are Messianic titles, so the listeners may have heard this as a *further claim* (cf. I Chron. 17:11-14; Psa. 2:1-12; Dan. 7:13,14).

In verse 30, we get a restatement of the principle stated in vs. 19, but here with a different focus: “I can do nothing on My own initiative (lit., ‘from Myself’). As I *hear*, I *judge*...” **Even Jesus’ method of making judgments was not discerning by outward appearances, or trusting in self-discernment, but by listening to the Father.** His judgment was sound, because He only wanted God’s will. His judgment was not distorted by self-agenda or pride.

“**If I alone bear witness of Myself, My testimony is not true**” (vs. 31). Jesus recognizes that **His testimony, by itself, would not be convincing.** Consequently, **He identifies five witnesses that corroborate His claims.** They are: (1.) **John the Baptist** (vss. 33-35; cf. 1:6-8,19-37; 3:22-36. It is significant that Jesus speaks of him in the past tense in vs. 35. Apparently, he was no longer alive.); (2.) **the works**, or miraculous signs, that Jesus did (vs. 36 - The Father has given, or assigned them; but Jesus completes them.) (3.) **the Father** who sent Him (vss. 37,38); (4.) **the OT Scriptures** (vs. 39); and more specifically, (5.) **Moses** (vss. 45,46). Why don’t they get it? What is the *real problem?* -- vss. 37,38,40-47.