



Coptic Orthodox Diocese of the Southern United States



The Holy Gospel According to St. John

Chapter 5

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Introduction

Chapter Outline:

- A Man Healed at the Pool of Bethesda 1-15
- Honor the Father and the Son 16-23
- Life and Judgment Are Through the Son 24-30
- The Fourfold Witness 31-47

A Man Healed at the Pool of Bethesda 5:1-15



- *a feast of the Jews*, Several Fathers of the Church and contemporary scholars see that the circumstances mentioned in this chapter show that this was the Passover
- The other three Evangelists did not show much interest in the service of the Lord Jesus Christ in Judea
- They do not refer to the Passover feasts which occurred after the Lord's baptism until His crucifixion
- Whereas St. John refers to all those feasts: the first in 2:13, the second here 5:1, the third 6:4 and the fourth 13:1

A Man Healed at the Pool of Bethesda 5:1-15



- However, he does not say here explicitly that it was the Passover; he says *a feast of the Jews*
- Some scholars say that it was not the Passover, but rather the Feast of Weeks
- Both St. Cyril the Great and St. John Chrysostom are of this opinion
- Feast of Weeks was called Shavuot in Hebrew but was called the Feast of Pentecost [50th day in Greek, *pentekoste*] in the 1st century AD because it came 50 days after the Feast of Firstfruits

A Man Healed at the Pool of Bethesda 5:1-15



- Like the feasts of Unleavened Bread and The Feast of Tabernacles, the Feast of Weeks is a "pilgrim feast" that requires the attendance of all men of the Covenant, Exodus 23:14-17
- The reason some think this was the Feast of Weeks is that the Lord Jesus Christ talked about the meaning of Sabbath and blamed them for not believing Moses, for if they did they would have believed Him because the Law testifies of Him (45-47)
- *Jesus went up to Jerusalem*, According to the Law men should go up to Jerusalem for the feast

A Man Healed at the Pool of Bethesda 5:1-15



- He did not want to exempt Himself since He accepted to be the Son of Man who is under the Law
- In chapters 3&4 we had the themes of "new birth" and healing of the soul through "water and the spirit"
- Now John leads us to the "healing waters" of the famous pools of Bethesda
- *There is,* Some claim that the fact John used present tense ("there is") in describing the pool as proof that John wrote before the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD

A Man Healed at the Pool of Bethesda 5:1-15



- This does not necessarily imply that the pool and its porches must have been destroyed too
- John could simply be using the present tense relative to the time of the event he describes (not relative to the time when he wrote)
- The pool has been discovered recently and it is beside the church of ST. Hannah and it is shown to travelers to the present day
- This pool is located on the outskirts of Jerusalem
- It was beside the Sheep gate, Nehemiah 3:1-32 and 12:39

A Man Healed at the Pool of Bethesda 5:1-15



- It was only through this gate that the animals, which were approved for the sacrifices in the Temple, entered the city
- Bethesda means “house of mercy”
- It was so called on account of its strong healing qualities - the characteristic of restoring health to the sick and infirm
- St. John Chrysostom taught that the pool of Bethesda was a symbol of the promise of Christian Baptism

A Man Healed at the Pool of Bethesda 5:1-15



- This ancient healing pool only cured physical illnesses and only cured one person now and then
- But Baptism, St. John Chrysostom assures us, heals the soul and is available to everyone who comes to Christ in faith
- However, St. John reminds us, in both cases, in Baptism and at the pool of Bethesda, God's power is shown through the natural element of water! [Homilies on St. John, 36, 1]

A Man Healed at the Pool of Bethesda 5:1-15



- He mentions, among the sick, only three groups: the blind, the lame and the paralyzed
- Those are the disabled who cannot step down into the water
- For this reason a great number of those people gathered in the five porches around the pool
- *Went down*, The word seems to imply that the angel had ceased to descend when John wrote the gospel
- In the second verse, he spoke of the pool as being still in existence

A Man Healed at the Pool of Bethesda 5:1-15



- *at a certain time*, Some writers believe that the angel did not go down into the pool every day, but rather during certain seasons, especially the three great feasts
- Some observe that this event began after Eliashib, the high priest, built a wall in the direction of Jerusalem and sanctified it with prayer
- Consequently God gave evidence of His acceptance of that by the miraculous works at the pool
- Others believe that those miracles began with the birth of the Lord Jesus Christ

A Man Healed at the Pool of Bethesda 5:1-15



- Still others say they began with His baptism
- When it began, we do not know; but it is likely that it continued no longer than till the crucifixion of our Lord
- Some think that this never took place before nor after this time
- Neither Josephus, Philo, nor any of the Jewish authors mention this pool; so that it is very likely that it had not been long celebrated for its healing virtue, and that nothing of it remained when those authors wrote

A Man Healed at the Pool of Bethesda 5:1-15



- “And just as the nature of the water, here, did not heal of itself (because if it did it would have healed at all times) but healed through the work of the angel, similarly, our purification is not by means of the water simply, but through the grace of the Spirit that is accepted and absolves us from all our sins.” St. John Chrysostom

A Man Healed at the Pool of Bethesda 5:1-15



- Jesus, coming there, found a man who had suffered for 38 years from a certain infirmity
- We are not told what it was, but it was evidently quite severe; probably it was a palsy
- He had been troubled by it for 38 years, and it evidently made him so weakened that he needed someone else to put him into the water
- The length of the time he had been afflicted makes the miracle of his cure greater

A Man Healed at the Pool of Bethesda 5:1-15



- There could have been no conspiracy in this case; as his affliction had lasted thirty-eight years, it must have been known to many people; therefore he could not be a person prepared for the it
- All Christ's miracles have been done in such a way, and on such persons and occasions, as absolutely to prevent all possibility of the suspicion of imposture or deception
- When He realized the man's illness and how long he had suffered, Jesus asked if the man wanted to be made well

A Man Healed at the Pool of Bethesda 5:1-15



- This appears to be, like many other questions asked by Jesus, a rhetorical and not literal question designed mainly to get the person's attention and to introduce what Jesus intended to do
- It was obvious the man wanted to be healed
- Christ put this question, to raise him to a lively faith and hope
- It is designed to excite in this person faith, hope, and a greater desire of being healed

A Man Healed at the Pool of Bethesda 5:1-15



- He wanted him to reflect on his miserable state, that he might be better prepared to receive a cure, and to value it when it came
- “The patience of the paralytic is amazing because he remained thirty-eight years waiting every year to be freed from his sickness. He stood fast and did not leave the place. Contemplate this man who remained paralytic for thirty-eight years seeing, every year, other people healed of their diseases and looking at himself tied down by his paralysis, and yet not despairing.”
St. John Chrysostom

A Man Healed at the Pool of Bethesda 5:1-15



- Usually, when a person lies in his bed for all those years, he is furious and suffers from psychological and nervous trouble
- Nevertheless, when this man heard the question of the Lord Jesus Christ, he did not angrily say, "Don't you see me watching for the angel to come down to stir the water? How can you ask me if I wanted to be made well?"
- Instead, he answered the Lord Jesus Christ with amazing meekness
- His problem was that he could not get into the water quickly enough

A Man Healed at the Pool of Bethesda 5:1-15



- Someone else always stepped into it before he did
- Jesus solved the man's problem without the pool or any other method
- Jesus speaks here as God
- He speaks in no name but His own, and with an authority which belongs to God alone
- And what is the consequence?
- The man became whole immediately; and this sudden restoration to health and strength was an indisputable proof of the omnipotence of Christ

A Man Healed at the Pool of Bethesda 5:1-15



- It has been remarked, that our Lord, after having performed a miracle, was accustomed to connect some circumstance with it, which attested its truth
- For example, after the miracle of the five loaves, He ordered the fragments to be collected, which were more in quantity than the loaves themselves, though several thousands had been fed
- When He changed the water into wine, He ordered some to be taken first to the steward of the feast, that he might taste and bear testimony to its genuineness and excellence

A Man Healed at the Pool of Bethesda 5:1-15



- When He cured the lepers, He commanded them to show themselves to the priests, whose business was to judge of the cure
- So here, He decided it necessary, after having cured this infirm man, to order him not only to arise, but to take up his bed, and walk, which sufficiently attested the miracle which He had performed
- God's work is ever known by its excellence and good effects

A Man Healed at the Pool of Bethesda 5:1-15



- “Observe the faith of this paralytic: when he heard Christ's saying, "Rise, take up your bed and walk", he did not laugh; he got up and became well. He did not disobey but rather took up his bed and walked.” St. John Chrysostom
- This verse closes by telling us when this happened, *that day was the Sabbath*
- In so saying, John introduces the controversy that followed, as described in subsequent verses

A Man Healed at the Pool of Bethesda 5:1-15



- But why Jesus commanded a man to do on *the Sabbath* what was understood to be a violation of the day? Exodus 20:8-10; Jeremiah 17:21; Nehemiah 13:15
- To this it may be answered
 1. That the Son of man was Lord of the Sabbath, and had the right to declare what might be done, Matthew 12:8; John 5:17
 2. This was a poor man, and Jesus directed him to secure his property

A Man Healed at the Pool of Bethesda 5:1-15



3. This was not contrary to the spirit of the law; *the Sabbath* was made to honor God; the Jews extended the obligation of the *Sabbath* beyond what was intended by the appointment. They observed it superstitiously, and Jesus took every opportunity to convince them of their error, and to restore the day to its proper observance, Matthew 12:6-11; Luke 6:9, 13:14, 14:5

A Man Healed at the Pool of Bethesda 5:1-15



4. It was consistent with the wisdom of Christ to do His miracles so that they might be seen and known by a multitude of people, and especially in Jerusalem, which was the capital of the country, and the center of the Jewish religion; and this very circumstance of the healed man carrying his bed on the Sabbath day must call the attention of many to this matter, and cause the miracle to be more generally known

A Man Healed at the Pool of Bethesda 5:1-15



- The man bases the use of his power upon the will of Him who had given it
- That has been the one divine voice he has heard, and it cannot be wrong for him to obey it
- *He who made me well said to me, 'Take up your bed and walk,*
The man does not place the responsibility on the Lord Christ; nor does he wish to change the accusation of breaking the Sabbath
- He only stresses the fact that it is impossible for Him who has the power to heal in this sovereign manner to make a mistake or do evil

A Man Healed at the Pool of Bethesda 5:1-15



- The Jews began by questioning the man's conduct, but they soon switched to questioning Jesus' conduct
- The Jews should have been impressed by the fact that the He who gave this instruction had done a great miracle
- If He could do a miracle, He must have been from God
- The purpose of miracles was to confirm a man to be a teacher from God
- If Jesus could do such a great miracle and then told the man to carry away his bed, that of itself should have proved that carrying the bed was in harmony with God's law

A Man Healed at the Pool of Bethesda 5:1-15



- *for Jesus had withdrawn*, He had not yet finished His work, and would not expose Himself to the envy and malice of the Jewish rulers
- St Cyril of Jerusalem in his homily on "The Healing of the Paralytic" taught that Jesus withdrew into the crowd, shunning praise, to teach us to serve God out of love and not to seek worldly recognition. When we receive earthly acknowledgement for a good work we have already received our reward that could have been given to us in heaven

A Man Healed at the Pool of Bethesda 5:1-15



- The man being conscious that it was through the mercy of God that he was restored, (though he did not as yet know distinctly who Christ was), went to the temple to return thanks to God for his cure
- Whether this was on the same day, or some other, does not distinctly appear, but it was probably the same day, after he had carried home his bed
- Our Lord, intending to reveal to this man who He was, gave him two proofs of the perfection of His knowledge

A Man Healed at the Pool of Bethesda 5:1-15



1. He showed him that He knew the secret of the past, *sin no more*, thereby hinting that his former sins were the cause of his long affliction
 2. He showed him that He knew the future, *lest a worse thing come upon you*, if your iniquity be repeated, your punishment will be increased
- Jesus came to the temple particularly to grant spiritual insight, despite His knowledge that His numerous enemies wanted to kill Him

A Man Healed at the Pool of Bethesda 5:1-15



- Nevertheless, since there was an urgent need to meet a person to build him, Christ did not refrain from going for this man's sake
- He has healed the sick man's body, and now He will declare His interest in healing the man's soul from sin
- “When we are baptized we are told ‘See, you have been made well. Sin no more, lest a worse thing come upon you.’” St. Jerome
- *The man departed and told the Jews,* He did not say it was Jesus who had ordered him to carry his bed

A Man Healed at the Pool of Bethesda 5:1-15



- But it was Jesus who had cured him; and he left them to draw the conclusion
- The motive of the man may have been one of gratitude, or may have arisen from a sense of duty, seeing that he had not answered the question of the Jews, and had been himself charged with doing the unlawful thing
- The narrative does not suggest that he did this in a tone of boldness

A Man Healed at the Pool of Bethesda 5:1-15



- The impression is rather, that he felt that this power came from a prophet sent by God, and that he told this to those who were God's representatives to the nation, supposing that they would recognize Him too
- However, some commentators suggest that he was not a loving or kind person and he seems to have been very upset by the charge and warning he had just received, and went to tell those who had already condemned the Savior's conduct to tell them it was Christ

Honor the Father and the Son

5:16-23



- For what cause did the Jews seek to destroy our Lord?
- Because He had healed a poor man, who had been diseased thirty-eight years, and ordered him to carry home the bed on which he lay!
- How cruel and merciless must their malice have been!
- Instead of honoring Jesus as a prophet from God because He could do such great miracles, they wanted to kill Him!

Honor the Father and the Son

5:16-23



- Such was their zeal for their human traditions that they would seek to kill a man for doing a deed that ought to have proved to them that He was from God!
- They no longer seem concerned about the conduct of the man who was carrying his bed on the Sabbath
- The issue now is what *He had done these things on the Sabbath*
- He makes it clear to them that the Father created the world in six days and rested on the seventh day , which is the Sabbath

Honor the Father and the Son

5:16-23



- He ceased His work of creation because He had completed everything
- But, though He rested from creating, He never ceased from preserving and governing that which He had formed
- He continued caring for His creation, shepherding it and managing its affairs
- In this respect He can keep no Sabbath, for nothing can continue to exist, or answer the end proposed by the Divine wisdom and goodness, without the continual energy of God

Honor the Father and the Son

5:16-23



- Thus, the Son sanctifies the Sabbath with the continuous work of love as He cares for His beloved
- He works continuously so that all may be made well and grow in knowledge and glory
- *I have been working*, I am constantly employed in the same way, governing and supporting all things, comforting the wretched, and saving the lost; and to Me, in this respect, there is no Sabbath
- Jesus here proved that they were objecting to the work of God Himself!

Honor the Father and the Son

5:16-23



- “Do not think that My Father rested on the Sabbath means that He did not work. He is working even now and likewise I am working. And just as the Father is without fatigue, so is the Son without fatigue... the works of the Father and the works of the Son are not separate... AS the Father and the Son are not separate, so are the works of the Father and the works of the son not separate... What the Father does the Son and the Holy Spirit also do. For, everything was made by the word, "For He spoke, and it was done." St. Augustine

Honor the Father and the Son

5:16-23



- Jesus' argument, however, just turned the Jews more fully against Him
- His justification of the holiness of the Sabbath through Divine work, and not through refraining from work, bore the testimony that He was equal with God whom He called His Father
- Therefore, they hated Him more, because there is nothing that incites them more than His assertion of His divine authority
- Therefore, *sought all the more to kill Him*, because in their opinion He blasphemed

Honor the Father and the Son

5:16-23



- The punishment for both accusations is death, Exodus 31:14; Leviticus 24:16
- Instead of concluding that Jesus was wrong because He healed on the Sabbath, they should have considered the miracle to be evidence that He was right and they were wrong
- But instead of admitting the force of Jesus' evidence, the Jews became all more determined to kill Jesus
- In many places of the Old Testament, God is called the *Father* of the Israelites, and they His *children*

Honor the Father and the Son

5:16-23



- But here, and on several other occasions, the Jews very well saw, that He called God His Father in a quite different sense from that in which He could be said to be their Father
- His words made Him equal to God, and that He is *making Himself equal with God*
- And therefore St. Augustine says on this verse, “Behold the Jews understand what the Arians do not.”
- *the Son can do nothing of Himself*, Because of His inseparable union with the Father

Honor the Father and the Son

5:16-23



- In His speech He always asserts the oneness (unity) of God, and that He is one with the Father, equal with Him
- Jesus does whatsoever God does, and therefore is no created being
- The Son can do nothing but what He sees the Father do
- If Jesus can do nothing but what God does, then He is no creature
- He can neither sin nor err, nor act imperfectly

Honor the Father and the Son

5:16-23



- The conclusion from our Lord's argument is, "If I have broken the Sabbath, so has God also; for I can do nothing but what I see Him doing."
- If you ask: then, what is the meaning of Christ saying, "the Son can do nothing of Himself"?
- This means that He cannot do anything opposed or strange to His Father
- This statement proves His equality with His Father and His agreement with Him very much

Honor the Father and the Son

5:16-23



- *He sees*, The Son does not imitate the Father in the same way a disciple imitates Jesus
- Jesus used the word "sees" because men come to understand things through their senses, like the sense of sight
- It is to do and produce by the same action, all that the Father does and produces
- This is the general interpretation of the ancient Fathers: St. Athanasius, St. Basil, St. Gregory of Nazianzus, St. John Chrysostom, St. Cyril, St. Ambrose, St. Augustine

Honor the Father and the Son

5:16-23



- It is impossible for Him to act with individual self-assertion independent of God, because He is the Son
- Their Will and work are one
- The Jews accuse Him of blasphemy; and blasphemy implies opposition to God: but He and the Father are most intimately united

Honor the Father and the Son

5:16-23



- There was no opposition between Jesus and the Father, as the Jews thought
- Instead, the Father loved Jesus and (by implication) approved of all He did
- The Father's love for the Son compels Him to make known all His works to Him
- The Son's relation to the Father compels Him to do what the Father does

Honor the Father and the Son

5:16-23



- Jesus knew the works of the Father because, in His relationship with the Father, He was able to witness firsthand what He did
- Jesus then did as the Father did
- Again, Jesus is describing the unity or oneness between the Father and Himself
- The Father did not condemn Jesus but approved of Him
- How else could His miracles be explained?

Honor the Father and the Son

5:16-23



- As a result, Jesus deserved to be exalted, not criticized by the people
- These words may also be explained of Christ, as man
- But the Church Fathers understand them of Christ, as God, in this sense, that the Father, and the Son, or the Father by the Son, will show greater miracles hereafter done by Christ, that more persons may admire and believe
- *as the Father raises the dead*, This He did in the case of the widow's son at Zarephath Sidon, 1 Kings 17:22, by the ministry of the Prophet Elijah

Honor the Father and the Son

5:16-23



- And again, in the case of the Shunammite's son, 2 Kings 4:32-35, by the ministry of the Prophet Elisha
- *so the Son gives life to whom He will*, The Son raises whom He will as what happened to Jairus' daughter, Mark 5:35-42; the widow's son at Nain, Luke 7:11-15; and Lazarus, at Bethany, John 11:14-44
- *whom he will*, Here our Lord points out His sovereign power and independence

Honor the Father and the Son

5:16-23



- He gives life according to His own will; not being obliged to supplicate for the power by which it was done, as the prophets did; His own will being absolute and sufficient in every case
- He has the keys of Hades and of Death, Revelation 1:18
- He has the key of David, He who opens and no one shuts, and shuts and no one opens, Revelation 3:7
- “This, absolutely, does not mean that the Son gives life to some, and the Father raises others. It means that the Father and the Son raise the same persons, because the Father makes all things through the Son.” St. Augustine

Honor the Father and the Son

5:16-23



- This confirms what he had said before, John 5:17,19, that the Father acts not without the Son, nor the Son without the Father
- Their acts are common, their power equal
- They have one authority and they work together
- The Father created us through the Son, redeemed us through His death, and judges us through Him

Honor the Father and the Son

5:16-23



- He was the One who began the battle against the kingdom of darkness, and He announces its total destruction in the Last Judgment
- “And lest when you hear that the Father is His source, you conjecture that there is a difference in essence or a lack in honor, He said He will come and judge you, proving by that His equality with the Father. For, He who has the authority to punish and judge whom He will, has the same authority as the Father.”
St. John Chrysostom

Honor the Father and the Son

5:16-23



- As the Jews asked for His judgment and murder legally, He declared that He is the One who judges and will judge all humanity the Day of Judgment
- Since He has all these powers of Deity, Jesus flatly asserted that all people should honor Him “even as” they honor the Father
- He ought to receive the same kind and degree of honor that the Father does
- But the Father is worshipped as Deity, and none can receive that honor who is not Deity, Isaiah 42:8; Matthew 4:10; Acts 10:25,26; Revelation 22:8-9

Honor the Father and the Son

5:16-23



- The fact that Jesus should be honored “even as” the Father proves that He is equal with the Father as Deity, John 17:5
- To deny, belittle, or refuse to honor Him is to treat the Father in the same way, since the Father sent Him and confirmed His claims
- Such was the state of these Jews who criticized Jesus despite the evidence of His miracles
- And such is also the state of any today who deny Jesus’ Deity and fail to worship Him as Deity

Life and Judgment Are Through the Son 5:24-30



- Since Jesus possesses Deity and was God in the flesh on earth, He further affirmed that people must hear His message and believe in the One who sent Him in order to have eternal life
- Those who do so will not stand condemned, but will pass from death to life
- We pass from death to life in a spiritual sense, passing from spiritual death to spiritual life – being born again as in John 3:5; Romans 6:3; Galatians 3:26,27; 1 Peter 1:23
- To live in sin is to live in death; and those who live and die in this way shall die eternally

Life and Judgment Are Through the Son 5:24-30



- *and now is*, Means it is very near at hand, John 4:23
- *the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God*, Some understand this concerning the special resurrection of such bodies as Christ raised while He was upon the earth from death to life, of which number was Lazarus and the daughter of Jairus, &c.
- Others understand it of the general resurrection, spoken of John 5:28-29
- Because here is no mention of believing, but only hearing a voice

Life and Judgment Are Through the Son 5:24-30



- But the most and best interpreters rather understand these words of those who are dead in trespasses and sins, shall hear the voice (the word) of the Son of God, believe, and receive spiritual life through Him
- *Those who hear will live*; Those who so hear the voice of Christ in the gospel, as to give a firm and steady assent to it, and, upon the recognition of it, shall receive Christ as their Mediator and Savior, shall live eternally
- They do live the life of grace, and shall live the life of glory

Life and Judgment Are Through the Son 5:24-30



- “For” shows that this verse gives the reason why the statements of the previous verses are true
- *For as the Father has life in Himself*, The Son has spoken of the dead hearing His voice and living, but this giving of life to others can only be by one who has in Himself an original source of life
- This the Father has, and this the Son also has
- To the Son in His pre-existent state it was natural, as being equal with the Father

Life and Judgment Are Through the Son 5:24-30



- *He has granted the Son*, Some see the meaning here is that the Father has given the Son power to have life in Himself – i.e., the Son was empowered while on earth, and as a result of His life on earth, people were able to spiritually pass from death to life (as described in verses 24-25)
- The Son can give life to whom He will, just as the Father can (verse 21)
- This explains why Jesus can enable people to pass from spiritual death to life

Life and Judgment Are Through the Son 5:24-30



- By Him they can be forgiven and become children of God, born again, having a spiritual relationship with Him and hope of eternal life
- This does not deny that Jesus inherently had power of life
- But on earth He took the status of a servant and did only what the Father empowered Him to do (verse 19)

Life and Judgment Are Through the Son 5:24-30



- When He raises the dead, we see Him as the Son of God who gives life and resurrection
- He also has authority to judge all men because He is the Son of Man
- This is the same point as in verse 22
- Note how verses 26-27 parallel verses 21-22
- We see Him carrying our nature, becoming the Son of Man who died and rose and granted us His justification

Life and Judgment Are Through the Son 5:24-30



- Saint Augustine says, Christ is "the Son of God in Himself" [25] It was necessary (in His love) to become the Son of Man when He took us in Himself, or took our nature
- In saying *and has given Him authority to execute judgment also, because He is the Son of Man*, He turns our attention to the prophecy of Daniel the prophet about Him, Daniel 7:13-14
- As a "son of man," Jesus experienced the temptations people must experience in life
- He can understand our problems (as described in the book of Hebrews), yet without sin

Life and Judgment Are Through the Son 5:24-30



- *Do not marvel at this*, Apparently, some in the audience were amazed at Jesus' claims
- He may have anticipated an objection, as if they had said: "This cannot be: You are a man - You were born among us"
- But Jesus said that they should not be surprised that He will raise men spiritually from the dead (verses 24-25) when, in fact, He is also going to raise them physically from the dead!
- For greater things than these shall be done by Him

Life and Judgment Are Through the Son 5:24-30



- As if He is saying, “He who now addresses you, though disguised under the form of a man, shall appear in the great day to be the Judge of the living and dead
- By His almighty power, He shall raise all the dead; and, by His absolute wisdom and justice, shall pronounce the wicked to hell, and the righteous to heaven
- His previous statement was that only those who hear and believe the gospel would thereby pass from death to life (verses 24-25)
- But the resurrection described here is for all men, good and bad

Life and Judgment Are Through the Son 5:24-30



- It refers to all who are in the graves – physically dead
- And it will happen sometime in the future (the hour “is coming,” in contrast to “and now is”)
- When the Lord Christ rose from the dead, no voice was heard, because He rose by His own power and authority
- However, at our resurrection on the Last Day, the voice of Christ will be heard, for He has the authority to raise the dead
- Likewise, the sound of the angels' trumpets will be heard to announce the coming of the Omnipotent

Life and Judgment Are Through the Son 5:24-30



- Note that *all who are in the graves will hear His voice*²⁹ and *come forth*—
- Who did good will be raised to eternal life
- Wicked people will be raised to condemnation
- Jesus here directly contradicts the Premillennial theory, which teaches there will be two different resurrections
- Jesus' teaching instead is that *all*, both good and bad will come forth at the same "hour"

Life and Judgment Are Through the Son 5:24-30



- “As though Christ says here: 'You will not see in me a strange, different act or work that My Father does not desire.’” St. John Chrysostom
- Jesus then explained the standard by which He was acting
- Jesus repeat here what He has said before in verse 19 that He is One with the Father and Their Will and work are one
- He always asserts the oneness (unity) of God, and that He is one with the Father, equal with Him

Life and Judgment Are Through the Son 5:24-30



- He did not act alone or simply by His own ideas
- He was judging according to what He heard
- His judgment was righteous because He was seeking the will of His Father who sent Him, not His own will
- There is complete harmony between Jesus' will and that of the Father, so there is no conflict or disagreement



The Fourfold Witness 5:31-47

- Having stated His claims, Jesus proceeded to call a series of witnesses that His claims are valid
- If He bore witness of Himself without the witness of the Father through the prophets, and without performing divine, miraculous works, they would have had an excuse to consider His witness false
- He does not want to bear witness according to their criteria which are false



The Fourfold Witness 5:31-47

- In this way He did not give them a chance either to object to His witness or to doubt in His intention and think that He asks for temporary honor
- “When He says "My witness is not true" He was rebuking them for their view about and objection to Him. And when He said "Even if I bear witness of Myself, My witness is true" (John 8:14) He declared the essence of the same thing, which is that as He is God, they must trust Him even when He talks about Himself.”
St. John Chrysostom



The Fourfold Witness 5:31-47

- *There is another*, As if He is saying, “God the Father, who, by His Spirit in your prophets, described My person, office, and miracles. You read these scriptures, and you cannot help seeing that they testify of Me: - no person ever did answer the description there given, but Myself; and I answer to that description in the fullest sense of the word”
- *I know*, I am fully assured, that His testimony of Me is true
- Some understand it of John the Baptist, of whom He speaks
- But He naming John in the next verse, it seems most proper to understand this of the Father testifying of Christ



The Fourfold Witness 5:31-47

- They have had also the testimony of John the Baptist, who many times witnessed that He is the Messiah, and the *Son of God*, come to take *away the sins of the world*
- “He first said, “*You have sent to John*” and they would not send to him unless they considered him qualified to be believed.” St. John Chrysostom



The Fourfold Witness 5:31-47

- Jesus did not need any man's testimony to prove who He was
- He was who He was regardless of what men think about it
- Truth is truth, regardless of who does or does not believe it
- Yet, in order for people to be convinced of the truth so they could be saved, they needed evidence
- So, Jesus listed John as a witness



The Fourfold Witness 5:31-47

- John the Baptist was more than just a man; he was a prophet
- As such, he revealed light from God like a lamp burning and shining in the dark
- He was not the Light, but came to bear witness of the Light”, John 1:8
- Burning may refer to the zeal with which John executed his message
- Shining may refer to the clearness of the testimony which he bore concerning Christ



The Fourfold Witness 5:31-47

- It is supposed that John had been cast into prison about four months before this time, John 4:35
- As his light continued no longer to shine, our Lord says *he was*
- *for a time*, The time between his beginning to preach and his being cast into prison which is very short
- John's work came to them as light in darkness
- It attracted them and they went to it



The Fourfold Witness 5:31-47

- They were willing to find a source of joy in it
- It was though for a short time
- They sent to ask him questions, but they disregarded his answers
- They were exceedingly rejoiced to hear that the Messiah was come, because they expected him to deliver them out of the hands of the Romans
- But when a spiritual deliverance, of considerably greater moment was preached to them, they rejected it and the light which made it manifest



The Fourfold Witness 5:31-47

- Jesus then went beyond John's testimony by calling upon a still greater witness
- This witness would give even more convincing evidence that Jesus is who He claimed to be
- The very works He did proved that He is from God, sent by God, and empowered by God to do what He was doing
- How could He do such great miracles as He had done without the power and approval of God, John 3:2, 4:48?
- These miracles attest His mission and prove by themselves that nothing less than unlimited power and boundless love could ever produce them



The Fourfold Witness 5:31-47

- The Father Himself has testified of Him through the prophets as mentioned in the Old Testament and ended with the testimony of Saint John the Baptist
- The Father also testified of Him with His voice coming from heaven on the day of His baptism, Matthew 3:17 and when He was transfigured before three of His disciples
- “I make clear that God has no voice or form; He is above all forms and melodies that have this quality.” St. John Chrysostom



The Fourfold Witness 5:31-47

- St. Augustine discusses verse 37 saying: "Do not submit to the thought that you see God, a physical face; else with such thinking you adapt your physical eyes to seeing Him and you look for a face... Observe who is He to whom we sincerely say: 'My heart said to You, 'You face, Lord, I will seek' '... Search for Him with your hearts. The Holy Bible speaks about the face of God, His arms, hands, feet, chair, footstep... but do not think that what is meant here are human members. If you want to be God's temple you must break this false idol."



The Fourfold Witness 5:31-47

- Jesus then pointed out that the Jews were in no position to disprove His claims
- They had not seen God; they were not prophets who had received a voice or revelation from God
- So, what evidence could they present to disprove His claims?
- Jesus proceeded to explain the real reason they were rejecting His claims
- They did not have God's word in them



The Fourfold Witness 5:31-47

- They were not receptive to God's truth, but had rejected the evidence from God Himself
- And that is why they were rejecting Jesus
- Had they been obedient to God, they would have received Jesus
- Though they believe the Scriptures to be of God, yet they do not let them take hold of their hearts - His word is in their mouth, but not in their mind
- Note how plainly Jesus here rebuked the Jews



The Fourfold Witness 5:31-47

- Now another witness is called to testify for Jesus: *Scripture*
- Perhaps the Scriptures were never more diligently searched than at that very time because they were in expectation of the immediate appearing of the Messiah and because they found these scriptures to contain the promise of an eternal life
- So, Jesus here makes the argument that they can know He is the Son of God, because He fulfilled the prophecies of Scripture
- The accounts of Jesus' life are filled with examples of Old Testament prophecies that He fulfilled



The Fourfold Witness 5:31-47

- Though they studied the Scriptures, they rejected the One to whom the Scriptures pointed
- As a result, they did not have the life which the Scriptures predicted and which they hoped to have through the Scriptures
- Christ gives them reason why they do not *receive Him*, and His doctrine, nor *believe in Him*; because they are void of the love of God, full of self-love, envy, pride, seeking for praise and glory one from another



The Fourfold Witness 5:31-47

- He did not ask them for that because He was not in need of honor from them
- He speaks only through His love for their souls, that they may be saved
- This passage is best understood by comparing it to verse 44
- The Jews glorified one another, instead of seeking honor from God
- That is why they rejected Jesus



The Fourfold Witness 5:31-47

- This is the sense in which Jesus is saying He did not receive honor from men
- They resisted the Lord Christ under the pretence of jealousy for God, His glory and His Law and that they defend the divine right because Jesus broke the Law and blasphemed when He made Himself equal with the Father
- Now He discloses their reality that they have no true love for God, nor zeal for His name, honor or Law



The Fourfold Witness 5:31-47

- For, if they had that love, they would have known, in truth, who Jesus is; they would have understood His person and work
- If they had the love of God in them, it would inspire them with a single desire to know His mind and will, and yield themselves to it, in spite of prejudice and regardless of consequences



The Fourfold Witness 5:31-47

- Jesus came in His Father's name, by His authority, acting as He directs, as His representative, having His stamp of approval and proof of authenticity, John 5:19,30; Acts 4:7-11
- He had given the proof of His authority by His miracles and other evidence He had just cited
- Yet despite the evidence, they had rejected Him
- This is what proves that they did not love God and their hearts were not right



The Fourfold Witness 5:31-47

- The problem was not lack of evidence, but an improper attitude toward evidence
- Yet the same people, in many cases, will accept men as being from God, even when those men have no such proof as Jesus had
- Why was this so? Because the men said what the people wanted to hear, 2 Timothy 4:2-4!
- Jesus identifies three obstacles preventing His hearers from recognizing that He is the Messiah and Son of God:
 - 1) their lack of love of God, 2) their striving after human glory, and 3) their prejudiced interpretation of sacred Scripture



The Fourfold Witness 5:31-47

- “The Jews did not accept the Lord Jesus Christ who is the Son of God, who is God; but they will receive the impostor who will call himself God.” Father John of Damascus
- “Who is he about whom He said will come in his own name? He mentions this in a mysterious way that he who will come is the Antichrist.” St. John Chrysostom.
- “It was said about the Antichrist and about all those who deny the Lord, these words: "I have come in My Father's name, and you do not receive Me; if another comes in his own name, him you will receive." St. Augustine



The Fourfold Witness 5:31-47

- The Lord Christ made it clear that their problem is in themselves
- Their corruption blinded their eyes and they did not know the truth and receive Him
- The grand obstacle to the salvation of the scribes and Pharisees was their pride, vanity, and self-love
- They lived on each other's praise
- If they had acknowledged Christ as the only teacher, they must have given up the good opinion of the multitude; and they chose rather to lose their souls than to lose their reputation among men!



The Fourfold Witness 5:31-47

- They accused Him of breaking the Sabbath and He proved to them that with His work He sanctified the Sabbath because He works according to the Father's pleasure
- Now that the falseness of their accusation has been revealed, He does not in turn accuse them of breaking all the Law because He does not need to do that, nor did He come for this purpose
- He was not incarnate to judge the people, but to save them
- He leaves Moses himself in whom they trust, he himself will accuse and judge them



The Fourfold Witness 5:31-47

- Moses had predicted the Messiah and prepared the people for his coming, Genesis 49:10; Deuteronomy 18:18; Acts 3:22, 7:37
- Besides, Moses pointed out the Messiah in a multitude of symbols and figures, which are found in the history of the patriarchs, the ceremonial laws, and especially in the whole sacrificial system
- All these were well-defined, though shadowy representations of the birth, life, sufferings, death, and resurrection of the Savior of the world



The Fourfold Witness 5:31-47

- Moses has also given them certain marks to distinguish the false from the true prophet, Deuteronomy 13:1-3, 18:22, which, if they apply to Jesus, they would find that He is not a false but a true prophet of the Most High God
- If they do not draw these conclusions from Scriptures which their very letter, as well as their spirit, authorizes them to draw, how shall they believe His words, against which they have taken up the most ungrounded prejudice?



The Fourfold Witness 5:31-47

- They have the field but they do not search for the treasure hidden in it
- Saint Paul says that a veil still lies on their heart when Moses is read, 2 Corinthians 3:15, and they do not understand the aim of the divine word
- The discourse of the Lord Christ ends in complete silence on the part of the resistant group because they had no answer
- It seems that all they did was that they pardoned Him silently
- But their hearts were more hardened waiting for an opportunity to trap Him



The Fourfold Witness 5:31-47

- It is proper to remark, that the testimonies here cited all rise gradually one above another, and make a body of evidence that must leave the disbelieving Jews without excuse: for they pay no regard to Jesus Christ Himself, nor to John the Baptist, nor to the evidence of miracles, nor to the voice of God, nor to the Scriptures, nor even to Moses himself



The Fourfold Witness 5:31-47

- Jesus challenges His audience in verse 47 that if they cannot believe what Moses wrote, how can they believe what He says?
- This same challenge is there for us today
- If you can deny the truth of some of Sacred Scripture, then how can you believe any of it?
- St. Athanasius writing in the 4th century AD, summarizes the main point of John chapter 5 when he writes: *The Son of God is sent by the Father to become the Son of man, to restore the sons and daughters of God. [Athanasius: Selected Works and Letters]*



Discussion

- What is the significance of Jesus' question to the paralytic man? Do you think he still had hope to get better?
- In what way is the pool at Bethesda similar to the water from John 2 and John 4?
- In what ways do people today seek to be healed spiritually outside of Christ?
- What did the man have to do to be healed?
- What characters of Jesus are exhibited in this act of healing?



Discussion

- Why does Jesus slip away after the healing?
- Why did He not heal other disabled people who were at the pool?
- Why do we struggle with the reality that God chooses to heal while allowing others to suffer?
- Why did Jesus choose to perform this miracle on the Sabbath?
- Did Jesus violate the Sabbath here? Explain and prove your answer
- Why did this make these Jews even more determined to kill Jesus?



Discussion

- How should men honor Jesus, and what happens if they refuse to so honor Him?
- What does this teach about Jesus' deity?
- Who gave witness to Jesus, and to what did Jesus compare him in vv 33-35?
- Who else bore witness of Jesus?
- What problem did the Jews have that explained why they rejected Jesus?
- Explain the connection between believing (or not believing in Moses) and believing (or not believing) in Jesus.