

The Gospel of John

Chapter 5:18-23

March 2, 1997

- **The Gospel of John Outline:**
 - Chapter 1 Our Lord is the Word, the Light and the Life
 - Chapter 2 The Lord of the Wedding Feast; Zeal for the purity of the temple
 - Chapter 3 Spiritual Birth, Belief and Salvation vs. Unbelief and Condemnation
 - Chapter 4 The Ministry in Samaria, The Harvest, The Faith of the Nobleman
 - Chapter 5 Paralytic man healed on the Sabbath, Unity of The Father and Son
- **Review and Introduction**

Having healed the paralytic man waiting at Bethesda, Jesus has angered His opponents to the point of them wanting to kill him. Given that chapter two records one Passover feast and chapter six records another, these events probably took place within the first year of His public ministry. Having already incited them to this point, this section of instruction is most certainly not intended to allay their concerns. However, it is these verses, where He is speaking to those who want to kill Him (the Jews), where we get some of the greatest insight into the deity of our Lord Jesus Christ.

- **Exposition**

John 5:18-23

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.

- Jesus knew that His opponents were not yet ready to kill Him because His defense makes no attempt to calm their fears of His teaching. Remember, the charges against Jesus at His "trial" were not that He was in rebellion but that He claimed equality with God. There have been those through the centuries who have attempted to show that Jesus never claimed that He was God. Certainly Jesus never claimed to be the Father, but in these verses alone we plainly see that Jesus claimed equality (at many levels) with the Father.
- Notice that Jesus breaks the law of the land, but He keeps the law of His Father who permitted the doing of good on the Sabbath. Given that the Sabbath was not created for God, Jesus previously taught that both He and the Father have been working since the creation. The various laws of God's nature do not cease on the Sabbath, if we cut ourselves, God still ensures that it heals and the prayers of the saints are heard at all times.

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."

- The purpose of this response is to warn His opponents that His actions are the actions of God and that if they wanted to try and thwart Him they would be taking on God.
- This passage has historically been used by those who attempt to deny the deity of Christ because here He says that He can do nothing apart from the Father. The point of the verse however is only to make a distinction between the Father and Jesus in the flesh not Jesus ontologically.

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."

- This verse should not be construed as saying that God loves Himself in the Son but rather here that the Father loves the Son in the flesh. There are always those who will attempt to take passages to the ditches of both extremes; either all the way to one side of the road or those who will take something all the way to the other side of the road. The proper place to be is on the road where we do not go beyond the meaning provided by the Scriptures.
- The miracle of healing the sick was not the greatest miracle they would see. Christ alludes to even greater things yet to come but as we know, the great works stand in condemnation of them because they ultimately did not believe.

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

- Both the Father and the Son have the power to give life. This life includes the natural life man but the life given by Christ also includes the life of regeneration and it comes with righteousness. Notice that there is a presupposition that all men are in need of life and that life is granted to them as Jesus sees fit.

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. NKJV

- As we read elsewhere, all authority on earth and in heaven has been given to Jesus. It is God's intention that we worship the Father through our worship of the Son by means of His Holy Spirit in truth. We can see the Triune nature of our God in that the Father is the destination, the Son is our access and the Spirit is the manner in which we worship Him.
- As we can see in the Old Testament, the Father has intended all along that He will one day be worshipped in the Son. Psalm 2
- What does it mean to honor the Son? We demonstrate our love for Christ by obeying His commands. Love must be manifest in the things we think, say and do. It is not enough to claim that you love your Lord in your heart, because if your love is true, it must be manifest in your actions. 1 John 5:1-3, 3:23