

# Jesus Answers Jewish Leadership

## John 5:19-47

This discourse of Jesus comes on the heels of the healing of the lame man at the Pool of Bethesda. We enjoyed looking at several strange details of this miracle. So why this rather complicated miracle?

- 1) A lesson to us how God extends grace and mercy to even unthankful, unrepented souls.
- 2) John's continuation of the theme of Christ's power and deity.
- 3) The beginning of the Religious Leaders' official open hostility and murderous plans in the light of amazing evidence of Jesus the Messiah.

In Jesus' debates with the Religious Leaders, we have seen talk about fasting, sabbath healings, and now Christ's claim to deity. In the original language, Jesus' demeanor is one of wonderful confidence and control but an air of great sadness. The grief Jesus felt because of the rejection of His beloved people, will be carried to the cross.

Jesus claims to deity was well understood by His enemies. In this first recorded discourse of Jesus, He will both prove His deity using various witnesses and teach the Religious Leaders about the unique relationship He has with His Father and mankind.

### Discourses of Jesus - What are Discourses?

A discourse means either "written or spoken communication or debate" or "a formal discussion of debate". To converse or carry on a conversation. Bible scholars over the years have divided Jesus' discourses in various ways. I found lists of about 25 "discourses" that include every conversation of Jesus in the Gospels. These have a personal interaction with Jesus and one person. Example: Nicodemus - John 3/Woman at the Well - John 4. I like to separate discourses into a teaching session or conversation of Jesus within a group setting. The audiences of these discourses would be the disciples, the multitudes, and, like this setting, the Religious Leaders.

As I studied the presentation of this material. I was reminded that in Jesus' teaching He will often introduce a point, then go on later to double back and explain it in further length later. This is not strange to teaching techniques, but one must be aware of the entire passage and work with all of it as a whole.

Instead of denying their accusation, Jesus will endorse it with proof and witnesses!

### I. Relationship to the Father – Oneness v. 19-23

**“Then answered Jesus and said unto them, Verily, verily, (Jesus begins with this phrase, “very important truth, catch this!” It is used three times in this discourse.) 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. <sup>20</sup> For the Father loveth the Son, and showeth him all things that himself doeth: and he will show him greater works than these, that ye may marvel. <sup>21</sup> For as the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth them; even so the Son quickeneth whom he will. <sup>22</sup> For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son: <sup>23</sup> That all men should honor the Son, even as they honor the Father. He that honoreth not the Son honoreth not the Father which hath sent him.” John 5:19-23**

- “The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do:” – We cannot disconnect the former words of Jesus from this phrase. They are connected! He will further explain and defend His

claim to Sonship! He never opposed the Father's will only walked in complete harmony. John 5:17 "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work." Jesus ties His healing on the Sabbath with His Father's constant work. The question was Sabbath work. God and He together work and heal on the Sabbath.

#### Four "For's" of Oneness (Equality)

1. "for what things soever he doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise." v. 19 – Jesus could only do what the Father does. Here we see Jesus claiming He is God! Don't miss this! God's Works = Christ's Works John 8:28; 10:30; 12:49; 14:10
2. "For the Father loveth the Son, and showeth him all things that himself doeth;" v. 20 – How is this complete Oneness possible? How can God the Father and God the Son walk in such complete harmony doing the same works? "For the Father loveth the Son," is the answer. Perfect knowledge, perfect relationship, perfect understanding. This next summer my husband John and I will be married 40 years. We are connected in so many ways. I often know what he is thinking, what he needs, and how he will react. Our philosophies and life goals are one. The bottom line is this is because I love John, and he loves me. We have learned and have studied each other all these years...but we are so flawed! It's called sin! Sins like impatience, selfishness, pride, jealousy, and that's just a few things with me! But with the Father and Son, they have perfect love, for only God is sinless, only God could love this way!

Father Loves Son = Son Obeys Father = We can see the acts of the Father as revealed by Jesus doing the Father's will John 1:18;14:9-10

This disclosure to us is totally dependent on the love shared between Father and Son. John 3:35; 8:29; 15:9-10; 17:20-26 When God called out from heaven three times and praised His Son, how did He refer to Jesus? "*Beloved Son*"

Before we leave verse 20, I want to look at the phrase,

\*"and he will show him greater works than these, that ye may marvel." – We are being told the Father will reveal (disclose with a desire to be done; will to be accomplished) to His Son, even more, greater works! Even greater than healing a lame man. We know in the not-so-distant future, Jesus will feed thousands with a little basket of food, raise a dead man after four days, walk on water, still a storm, and ultimately rise from the grave Himself! Why? "that ye may marvel." Not a trick to wow His opposition or gain cheap praise and honor from man, but amazing wonders were always a tool God used; a desire to see men come to faith in Christ their Messiah. (John 10:38)

3. "For as the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth them, even so the Son quickeneth whom he will." v. 21 – Here is the 3<sup>rd</sup> "for." It is an example of the same works shared between God the Father and His Son Jesus Christ; the resurrection of the dead. These **Religious Leaders all knew their Old Testament stories and knew only God held the keys to life.** (2 Kings 5:7) God's prophets Elijah and Elisha raised several from the dead. So Jesus said, "as the Father raiseth up the dead," and then He finishes with, "even so the Son quickeneth whom he will." (John 11:25) And we know Jesus will raise at least three people! (widow's son from Nain, Jairus' daughter, and Lazarus) Jesus was not only an instrument (like that of the prophets) of God's power but He had God's power. He could raise and heal whom He willed. But this resurrection goes beyond the miracles of the dead being raised again to life but of the future resurrection both spiritually and physically. This thought will be elaborated on in verses 24-30.

4. “For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son:” v. 22-23 – Lastly, this “for” is revealing truth concerning the judgment of man. These **Old Testament scholars knew God was the judge of the earth** (Gen. 18:25). But here Jesus is claiming to be a judge. Right now Jesus is the Savior of all those that would come to Him, but someday **all men** will stand before Him as Judge! Jesus is expressing His equality with the Father and this equality should bring about honor from mankind. Matt. 21:33-46; Phil. 2:9-11; I John 2:23

Yet, we must keep in mind these truths as expressed by Carson, “Though He is the unique Son of God (1:49) and may truly be called God (1:1, 18; 20:28), take to himself divine titles (8:58), and as in this context, divine rights (5:17), yet is he always submissive to the Father.” p. 250 (*Prayer in the garden – “not my will but thine be done.”*)

“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. <sup>25</sup> 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. <sup>26</sup> For as the Father hath life in himself; so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself; <sup>27</sup> And hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man. <sup>28</sup> Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, <sup>29</sup> 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 (Lit. - condemnation.)” John 5:24-29

**II. Relationship to Mankind – Give Life v. 24-29** The work of Christ for mankind is the giving of life. Spiritual life if one believes by faith in Christ’s death on the cross, and one day, resurrected life, for eternal joys with Him, or judgment to life in hell if Christ is rejected as Savior.

1. Spiritual Resurrection – “He that heareth my word, and believeth...hath everlasting life,” v. 24 – Jesus speaks here of the **wonderful salvation** He provides to the lost sinner – eternal life! (John 3:15-16, 18, 36; I John 3:14; 5:13) Hearing is not enough, one must hear and obey! There is no distinction between Christ’s words and God, again the truth of equality with God! The person who hears and believes moves from darkness to light; to eternal life with no condemnation (John 20:30-31; Rom. 8:1)! This all happens right now starting on earth!
2. Power of Resurrection – “The hour is coming, and now is,...” v. 25-30 – Even in His humanity, Christ has life within Himself given by His Father. Resurrection power! (John 1:4; 10:17-18; Acts 2:24; 3:15) **Both spiritual and physical resurrection** power is Christ’s. His voice calls them from the dead. Spiritual Life on earth (now is) – John 6:51, 63, 68; Eph. 2:1; Col. 2:13; I John 5:11 Resurrected Life with God (hour is coming) – Phil. 3:20-21; 1 Cor. 15:22-23; 52-54; I Thess. 4:16 It is after these resurrections Christ will judge both believers and unbelievers. Further explanation is given in v. 27-29.

\* Believer’s Resurrection – “resurrection of life” – v. 27-29 – Here Jesus is speaking of the day all believers look forward; Christ returning in the air and calling us to Him or when our bodies are resurrected to join them! The term “good” is not just works but the existence of true faith in Christ and then what is produced in one’s life. (John 3:21; James 2:14-20)

\* Unbeliever’s Resurrection – “resurrection of damnation” – v. 27-29 – This term speaks of the resurrection of those who have rejected Christ. This happens after the Tribulation period and immediately they are judged, this is called the Great White Throne Judgement. (Rev. 20:11-15)

The term “evil” (v. 29) is not works but the lack of true faith in Christ. (John 3:18-19; Rom. 2:5-10)

Before we leave these verses, I want to cover three more phrases.

“Son of God” – v. 25 This term is more often used by the apostles when referring to Christ. It was less commonly used by Jesus. It shows the close relationship with God. (Matt. 11:27) As the Son of God, He was man’s mediator with God, and those listening that day understood His claim to deity!

“Son of Man” – v. 27 Again, this is the most used term when Christ is referring to Himself. Matter of fact, only Stephen, in his sermon in Acts 7, is the only other who uses it. “Son of Man” is a messianic name of power and authority from Daniel 7:13-14. A very simple definition would be, God in human form. As the Son of Man, Jesus was God’s mediator with man. He had the power to raise the dead and judge because **He** is the Son of Man and those listening that day understood His claim to deity!

“Marvel not at this:” – v. 28 Jesus told the Religious Leaders, don’t be amazed at this, everyone will hear His voice and will be raised! (Acts 24:15) Just as Jesus’ voice healed the lame man; His voice will call from the grave! And then He will judge them! Please realize, raising from the dead and judging are works of God! Jesus is explaining – He is God and those listening that day understood His claim to deity! And it really is very amazing!

“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. <sup>31</sup>If I bear witness of myself, my witness is not true. <sup>32</sup>There is another that beareth witness of me; and I know that the witness which he witnesseth of me is true. <sup>33</sup>Ye sent unto John, and he bare witness unto the truth. <sup>34</sup>But I receive not testimony from man: but these things I say, that ye might be saved. <sup>35</sup>He was a burning and a shining light (Gk - lamp): and ye were willing for a season to rejoice in his light. <sup>36</sup>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. <sup>37</sup>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. <sup>38</sup>And ye have not his word abiding in you: for whom he hath sent, him ye believe not. <sup>39</sup>Search the Scriptures (Lit. – declaration - ”You do search the Scriptures”); for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me. <sup>40</sup>And ye will not come to me, that ye might have life. <sup>41</sup>I receive not honor from men. <sup>42</sup>But I know you, that ye have not the love of God in you. <sup>43</sup>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. <sup>44</sup>How can ye believe, which receive honor one of another, and seek not the honor that cometh from God only? <sup>45</sup>Do not think that I will accuse you to the Father: there is one that accuseth you, even Moses, in whom ye trust. <sup>46</sup>For had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me; for he wrote of me. <sup>47</sup>But if ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe my words?” John 5:30-47

**III. Presentation of Witnesses – Support Christ’s Claim v. 30-47** The Old Testament law required two or three witnesses to verify a claim in court. (Num. 35:30; Deut. 17:6; 19:15) Here Jesus will use this to finish His appeal to the Jewish Leadership.

No Witness was actually needed! – “the witness which he witnesseth of me is true.” v. 30-32

Jesus begins this last section of proof to His Deity with the idea of witnesses and starts with the recurring theme, “I can of mine own self do nothing.” Jesus’ desire and submission was to the will of the Father. If He would step out and do something on His own, then it would be away from the Father’s will and not true. But that is not possible, God the Son and God the Father walked in perfect agreement and step. The reality was Jesus didn’t need witnesses to prove anything. Jesus was the Word, full of truth and equal to His Father’s truth. (*Compare with John 8:13-19. Here the Religious Leaders will demand valid witnesses to Jesus’ claims. Again, Jesus will say His own witness agreed with the witness of the Father. v. 16, 18*)

But God had sent verifications of Jesus the Messiah, just as the Old Testament had said would come. Jesus will point them out to these Religious Leaders with the desire for them to believe. These proofs came by way of the “forerunner – John the Baptist,” “signs and wonders – Christ’s miracles,” and “prophecies fulfilled – the Scriptures.”

1. John the Baptist – “bear witness” - v. 33-35 – Jesus is giving a brief history of the relationship between John and the Jewish Religionists. In John 1:19-27, they had come to John to discern his intentions and message. John did “bare witness unto the truth” that they might believe. (v. 34; John 1:7) In this passage, Christ reminded them they “rejoiced” in his, message, and person “for a season.” John made it clear he was the forerunner of the Messiah, even quoting Mal. 3:1. Within those days John announced Jesus as the “Lamb of God” (John 1:29, 36) and “Son of God” (John 1:34). Ultimately, the Religious Leaders rejected John’s message concerning Christ. (Matt. 21:28-32)
2. Miracles – “works what I do, bear witness of me,” v. 36 – It is believed Jesus did hundreds, perhaps, thousands of miracles. These were the works of the Father, and they showed the Jews that He was from God. Even Nicodemus, one of their own, honestly admitted, “we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him.” (John 3:2) Now Nicodemus missed the mark, he saw Jesus from God at the time in John 3 and was not yet a believer that Jesus was God. These signs were given to prove Christ was from God. Even in the upper room, Jesus used these works as evidence before His disciples! (John 14:10) Jesus’ miracles were great proof of Him being the Messiah, yet the people didn’t believe it! (Is. 53:5-8) Jesus didn’t look like the Messiah they had envisioned! Lastly, don’t miss the two words in verse 36, “to finish.” At the time Jesus spoke to the Religious Leaders, Jesus had yet “to finish” the work of God. We know the greatest work would be done on Calvary when Jesus shed His precious blood for my sin and yours! Then He will announce, “It is finished.” (John 19:30)
3. Word of the Father – “the scriptures” – v. 37-47 – Jesus finishes His case with the witness of the Scriptures, the Old Testament. Though these religionists could quote much of the Scriptures and even knew the number of letters in each text, Jesus will point out they really didn’t understand the meaning. The phrase “Search the scriptures;” in verse 39 is a declaration of truth, Jesus is saying, “You do search the scriptures because you believe they hold the truth of eternal life. Those scriptures tell of me.” They had spent centuries searching the scriptures and missed Jesus! (2 Tim. 3:15) They knew the laws but missed the Savior. Their religious system centered on man: position, power, and posturing! Not on love and service to God! Jesus spoke of Moses, their highly respected prophet. He said plainly, “for he wrote of me. But if ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe my words?” (v. 45-47) These statements about Moses accusing them would have stung. They felt they followed Moses to the fullest and then some! But in reality, Moses’ words and laws often spoke against Israel’s lack of love and devotion to

God. Later the Gospel and Epistle writers reiterate the fact the Old Testament pointed to Jesus the Messiah over and over again! (Book of Matthew – 129 times referred to fulfilled prophecy in Christ; John 1:45; Luke 24:25-27; Acts 10:43; Heb. 1:1-4)

Alfred Edersheim, the converted Jewish Rabbi, described the oneness of the Father and Son with these beautiful words, “He (Christ) knew Him (God); He saw His working; He was in fellowship of love, of work, of power with Him. He had come to loose every yoke, to give life, to bring life, to be life---because He had life: life in its fullest sense. For, contact with Him whatever it may be, gives life: to the diseased, health; to the spiritually dead, the life of the soul; to the dead in their graves, the life of resurrections. And all this was the meaning of Holy Scripture, when it pointed forward to the Lord’s Anointed; and all this was not merely His own but the Father’s Will --- the Mission which He had given Him, the Work which He had sent Him to do.” Edersheim p. 323

Jesus was not intimidated by this interaction. As we study the life of Jesus chronologically, He returns to Galilee and the next two incidents of Christ will be of Him breaking Sabbath traditions. But we can be assured the Jewish Leadership in Jerusalem heard about it!

Please be aware, the healing of the lame man at the Pool of Bethesda was a catalyst to open opposition and will not be forgotten in the dialogue of the Jews with Jesus. In John 7:21-23 it is mentioned again within another Sabbath Day controversy.

### **Believers Application**

Jesus gave specific reasons why these Religious Elitest rejected Him. But in reality, they are the same reasons anyone continues in unbelief. As we study this passage, Jesus concludes with the reasons these men refused to receive Him as their Messiah.

1. **Rejection of the Mind** – As the Religious Leaders studied the Scriptures, they would not see the truth. The Law and Prophets were held up as sacred, but they actually rejected its teaching. They only wanted to see that which fit into their belief system. Yet the law could not bring eternal life. (Gal. 3:21-22) This is yet the problem with many religious people today! If they read and study the Bible, it is from their religious point of view. (Acts 28:23-28; 2 Cor. 3:12-17; 4:3-6)
2. **Rejection of the Will** – Jesus said, “And ye will not come to me, that ye might have life.” v. 40 They had made a conscious decision of the heart not to come to Christ! They would not! In verse 43, Jesus told them they are quick to put their faith in false teachings and willingly refuse to see the truth. It was much more important to them to receive praise, accolades, and special honors from one another than pleasing the God of heaven! Theirs was a religion of back-patting, front-row striving, and ladder climbing! Oh, how we must avoid that mindset in our churches and religious organizations!
3. **Rejection of the Heart** – Jesus pointedly said to these professional Jews, “But I know you, that he have not the love of God in you.” (v. 42) Wow, they believed they served God by doing His system. But Jesus saw through it all, right to their hearts! They had never heard God’s voice (v.37), never understood God in the flesh (v. 37), and were without any of God’s words in their heart (v. 38)! They loved their religious system, their position, their power, but not God! So when God Himself stood before them, they didn’t recognize Him or His words!

This amazing discourse was instigated by the healing of the lame man at the Pool of Bethesda. He was a broken man and a sinner that never committed himself to Jesus. The Jewish leaders in this event looked polished, righteous, and religious, but they too never committed themselves to Jesus. The lame man looked to fables and the supernatural of the pool, the Religious Leaders to self-righteous externals. Both were looking for hope in the wrong place! Jesus performed this wonderful, life-changing miracle, and both rejected him from the mind, the will, and the heart!

We as believers must keep Jesus first in our minds, our wills, and our hearts! Take a look at Romans 12:1-2 from the prospective of each of these areas. Emphasis not being conformed to the world but be transformed in mind, will, and heart!

1. Love from the Mind –
2. Love from the Will
3. Love from the Heart –