

- As we enter into chapter 5, let's remember that John has specific purposes in mind as he wrote his Gospel
 - Tonight, a couple of those purposes are squarely in view:
 - First, John explores the union of the deity of God with the humanity of human form
 - Jesus lowered Himself to become man, and in the form of man, He became a servant of the Father
 - But how does God serve Himself in that sense? How can One part of God be a servant to another part?
 - This relationship between Jesus incarnate and the Father in Heaven is a central focus in John's Gospel
 - it fascinates us to consider the ramifications of God becoming man
 - And we ponder how that change manifested itself in Jesus
 - But as we'll see tonight, the unique relationship that resulted from Jesus' incarnation yielded a model for our own relationship serving the Father
 - Secondly, John highlights the way Jesus was constantly contending with religious authorities
 - Why would men who supposed represented the Father have such concerns with the Son of the Father?
 - Wouldn't we expect that men appointed to teach Israel about God would be the first to embrace the very God they studied in the scriptures?
 - In this chapter, Jesus and the Pharisees will conflict over certain rules of life that the religious leaders imposed but Jesus ignored
 - So the question arises why are these conflicts happening, and what do they say about Jesus and these men
- The first part of chapter 5 describes a miraculous healing which sets up the conflict with the religious leaders
 - The second part revolves around the leaders' challenge to Jesus' teaching and Jesus' response

[JOHN 5:1](#) After these things there was a feast of the Jews, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem.

[JOHN 5:2](#) Now there is in Jerusalem by the sheep gate a pool, which is called in Hebrew Bethesda, having five porticoes.

[JOHN 5:3](#) In these lay a multitude of those who were sick, blind, lame, and withered,

[waiting for the moving of the waters;

[JOHN 5:4](#) for an angel of the Lord went down at certain seasons into the pool and stirred up the water; whoever then first, after the stirring up of the water, stepped in was made well from whatever disease with which he was afflicted.]

[JOHN 5:5](#) A man was there who had been ill for thirty-eight years.

[JOHN 5:6](#) When Jesus saw him lying there, and knew that he had

already been a long time in that condition, He said to him, “Do you wish to get well?”

[JOHN 5:7](#) The sick man answered Him, “Sir, I have no man to put me into the pool when the water is stirred up, but while I am coming, another steps down before me.”

[JOHN 5:8](#) Jesus said to him, “Get up, pick up your pallet and walk.”

[JOHN 5:9](#) Immediately the man became well, and picked up his pallet and began to walk. Now it was the Sabbath on that day.

- As we saw back in chapter 2, John again describes a feast in Jerusalem that requires Jesus to travel back down to the city
 - Generally, when Jews talk of a feast without mentioning it by name, they are referring to the feast of Passover, which was the most important feast on their calendar
 - Like today, we might say the holidays, and it’s understood we mean Christmas and New Years
 - So this is the second time Jesus travels to Jerusalem during His earthly ministry
 - That would set the time of these events to be about a year after the events in chapter 4, almost halfway through his earthly ministry
 - Going back to Jerusalem meant Jesus would also run into the Jewish religious leaders
 - John sets up one such conflict with a story of a healing by a pool in the city called Bethesda
 - It was located by the Sheep Gate, which was located in the northern part of the city wall according to Nehemiah
 - The name of the pool probably means house of mercy
 - A pool has been excavated in that place, and today it’s called St. Anne’s pool
 - Interestingly, John says the pool has five porticoes, which isn’t significant to the account
 - Except perhaps because the number five in scripture is the number of grace
- John says that around the pool lay a multitude of sick who came to the pool for healing
 - Why did they come to pool for healing?
 - In vs.3-4, we’re told people gathered around the water because they believed the angel of the Lord stirred the waters from time to time
 - And when the waters were stirred, the first to enter the pool would be healed
 - This possibility had attracted a large number of sick, who sat around the pool watching the water for hours or days at a time
 - As we consider this explanation for a moment, it’s sounds very curious and a bit suspect
 - Only one person received the benefit of the Lord’s mercy no matter how many were present around the pool
 - It was like God was dispensing His mercy on a lottery system
 - As if He only had a limited supply of healing power to go around
 - Why would the Lord ever dispense His mercy and grace in such a capricious and inevitably

frustrating way to those who seek after it?

- Secondly, this process required a measure of human effort or works to benefit from God's mercy
 - To be healed, someone has to have the strength to beat every other cripple to the water
 - So only those who had the physical capacity to enter the water quickly were able to receive the Lord's mercy
 - The worst conditions, the people who most needed the Lord's help, were excluded from receiving it, it would seem
 - Such a scenario suggests that God only supplies His mercy to those who have strength to contribute something in return
 - But that's never the way the Lord extends grace and mercy
 - On the contrary, the Lord gives help to the helpless
- Finally, the account says the healing happens because the "Angel of the Lord" stirs the water
 - But the Angel of the Lord is the Second Person of the Godhead, that is a pre-incarnate Jesus
 - Yet for the past 30 years, Jesus has lived in human form
 - So He couldn't have been stirring the waters at Bethesda unless His physical hand dipped into the water and moved it
 - Yet desperate people have continued watching the water expecting healing, which suggests they have been reacting to something else in the past 30 years
- The unavoidable conclusion is that the story of this pool wasn't a true story
 - The Lord never stirred the water and this pool did not produce healing
 - Nevertheless, a myth had taken hold that many people have chosen to believe
 - Desperate people assembled at this pool hoping that the superstition they had been told was true
 - And perhaps when the wind moved the water or because someone claimed they saw the water stirred, then a great rush of cripples began
 - And perhaps once in a while, someone claimed to have been healed, but then who could be sure
 - So the story of God healing through a pool was not true, though the idea held a power over the people
 - This still happens today as con artists work within the church promising miraculous healing to those who meet God's arbitrary test
 - Such nonsense serves the same purpose as other religious superstition, like weeping statues of Mary or grilled cheese sandwiches that look like Jesus
 - They substitute for true relationship with the living God
- So why did John include this explanation in his account if it wasn't a true story
 - The answer is John *didn't* include this in his account
 - Rather, an enterprising copyist added this detail
 - In my Bible translation (NASB), the phrase that begins at the end of v.3 and continues until

the end of v.4 is in brackets

- Those brackets were inserted by the translators to alert the reader to the likelihood that these words are not reliable
 - They are not present in the earliest manuscripts, having appeared centuries later
 - The copyist was attempting to explain why so many gathered at the pool
 - So he inserted commentary to explain the myth, though he presents the explanation as if it were true
 - Take comfort in the fact that even when someone tries to add something to the scriptures, the Spirit has insured we can discernment the truth from what is not true
- Back to the story, Jesus asks a crippled man if he wanted to be healed
 - The man responds he hasn't been able to be healed yet because he can't make it happen
 - Someone has always beat him to it
 - He's been waiting for a miracle and has spent 38 years of his life trusting in this superstition to heal him
 - It's the utter epitome of hopelessness made worse by the deception of powerless religion
 - I'm sure his friends or the religious leaders simply told him he wasn't worthy of God's mercy
 - But now here stands Jesus, Who was prepared to extend God's mercy to this man
 - Take note the man never specifically asks Jesus for healing
 - Jesus asked if he wanted healing, and the man responded by explaining why he couldn't be healed
 - Clearly, his answer implies he wants healing
 - But the fact he doesn't seek healing directly from Jesus tells us he didn't realize Jesus could accomplish such a healing
 - It tells us the cripple was not as yet aware of Who Jesus was
- Nevertheless, at that Jesus orders the man to get up
 - Since this man is crippled and unable to walk, Jesus' words indicate He has healed the man
 - Not only has he been given back the ability to walk, but Jesus also restored strength to the man's limbs
 - After lying around for 38 years, he would have experienced significant atrophy in his limbs
 - Nevertheless, the man picks up the pallet or mat on which he was laying and he walks away healed
 - This account produces a strong contrast with the myth
 - The man has been taught a superstitious myth of human religion that emphasized he must be worthy to receive God's mercy
 - And year after he falls short
 - It's a discouraging, hopeless outlook
 - And yet this is always the recipe when men invent ways to find God

- These lies always begin with some mystery of supernatural power
- But at the core, false religion always relies on some human achievement to please God
- So that when the system fails us, we fall back to blaming ourselves for not doing enough to satisfy God
- But the living God doesn't dispense grace according to human rules or expectations
 - The Lord bring grace without a catch, and when the Lord decides to bring healing, the outcome doesn't rest on human abilities
 - Ironically, the Angel of Lord did visit the pool on that day
 - Jesus had the power to part the waters in the pool much less stir them, but Jesus didn't need parlor tricks to accomplish a healing
 - Jews seeks for such signs, but God's word is the real power of the Universe
- So by the word of God, a healing took place
 - And it came to the least powerful member of the crowd, the one with no ability to save himself
 - And it asked nothing of the man
 - In fact, Jesus didn't even wait for the man to make a request of Him
 - That's the difference between dead, powerless religion and the grace of God
 - Men look to their works to please God, and yet God is pleased when we hear and believe in His word
- Now this scene of the man's healing is just the warm up act for the conflict that follows in chapter 5
 - Notice at the end of v.9 John mentions that this healing happened on the Sabbath day
 - That's the key detail setting up the rest of the chapter
 - It leads to the first of several disputes between the Lord and Pharisees over the rules surrounding the Sabbath Day observance
 - Under the scribes and Pharisees, the Sabbath day observance in Israel had become a religion all its own
 - The rabbis even come to calling the Sabbath day the Bride of Israel or Jehovah's Queen
 - Under rabbinical tyranny, the Sabbath had become a religion of its own in Israel
 - It was the most important day of the week for religious observance and consequently for religious persecution as well
 - Almost anything action a person might take on that day could be deemed an offense against the Sabbath Law
 - So that by the time of Jesus' first coming, the rabbinical system in Israel had established something like 1,500 additional rules for how Jews must observe the Sabbath
 - And the penalties for breaking these rules were severe, including death
 - These rules had no relationship to the Law God delivered to Israel
 - As the Lord delivered the Sabbath, He included all the rules necessary for someone to observe the Sabbath successfully

- But men with false motives took God's law and turned it into an opportunity to gain political power over the people
- These rules granted power to those who made and enforced them while enslaving those who fell under them
 - And so naturally, it was a source of great concern to the Pharisee's when they witnessed Jesus instructing a man to act contrary to their 1,500 rules

[JOHN 5:10](#) So the Jews were saying to the man who was cured, "It is the Sabbath, and it is not permissible for you to carry your pallet."

[JOHN 5:11](#) But he answered them, "He who made me well was the one who said to me, 'Pick up your pallet and walk.'"

[JOHN 5:12](#) They asked him, "Who is the man who said to you, 'Pick up your pallet and walk'?"

[JOHN 5:13](#) But the man who was healed did not know who it was, for Jesus had slipped away while there was a crowd in that place.

[JOHN 5:14](#) Afterward Jesus found him in the temple and said to him, "Behold, you have become well; do not sin anymore, so that nothing worse happens to you."

[JOHN 5:15](#) The man went away, and told the Jews that it was Jesus who had made him well.

[JOHN 5:16](#) For this reason the Jews were persecuting Jesus, because He was doing these things on the Sabbath.

- The Pharisees (who John simply calls "the Jews") took immediate exception to finding a man walking out of the building carrying a mat
 - They tell him it is not permissible to carry the mat
 - Of course, God hadn't declared it was impermissible
 - It was not permitted according to their manmade rules concerning the Sabbath
 - Yet they portrayed their rules as equal to God's Law
 - In fact, they taught their obeying God's Law was achieved by following their rules
 - So they led people to believe that when they violated any one of these 1,500 rules, they were offending God
 - The people believed what they were told
 - And the Pharisees retained control over people as a result
 - The man responded by explaining he was told to carry his mat by the man who healed him
 - The man was saying a lot more than merely explaining his rationale for walking
 - He was implying that the man who told him to walk had greater authority than these men who tell him not to walk
 - The One who can heal a body merely by His word is demonstrating His authority as the Creator

- And if the Creator tells you to get up and walk with your pallet, you do it no matter how many men you might offend
- It's interesting that Jesus told the man specifically to walk and carry his pallet
 - Conceivably, Jesus could have just told the man to walk and leave his pallet behind
 - Instead, Jesus made a point to tell the man to carry it with him
 - It seems as though Jesus was inviting a confrontation with the Pharisees
 - In fact, Jesus slips away before they find Him because He has more important things to attend to
 - It's also revealing that when the Pharisees hear the man's explanation, they show no interest in his story of healing
 - They're only interested in the violation of their laws
 - They are more focused on their own interests and power than on any true working of God around them
 - Once again, notice the man still doesn't know who Jesus is
 - He can't identify Jesus to the Pharisees
 - And he certainly doesn't seem to appreciate that Jesus is the Messiah
 - Which tells us that Jesus didn't require this man to possess faith as a prerequisite for the healing
 - At this point in Jesus' ministry, He was performing miracles to establish His authority and prove His claims
 - So it didn't depend on a person accepting His testimony necessarily
 - Nevertheless, Jesus still wants to bring His identity to the man's attention after the healing
 - So, Jesus avoids the Pharisees for now so He can seek the man out and clarify His identity
- When Jesus finds the man in the temple (perhaps thanking God for the healing), He tells the man now that he has become well, do not sin anymore, so that nothing worse happens
 - Though the language is a bit odd to our ears, we should recognize this is the moment of this man's salvation
 - Jesus says to him that he has become well
 - Clearly, this would suggest his physical healing
 - But in this case, Jesus' words go deeper
 - In particular, notice that Jesus follows his first statement by saying do not sin anymore
 - That phrase appears in other places in the Gospels as well
 - A few chapters from now, Jesus encounters a woman caught in adultery, and after saving her, He says

[JOHN 8:10](#) Straightening up, Jesus said to her, "Woman, where are they? Did no one condemn you?"

[JOHN 8:11](#) She said, "No one, Lord." And Jesus said, " I do not condemn

you, either. Go. From now on sin no more.”

- From the Gospels, we learn that the phrase “go and sin no more” is an instruction Jesus offers those who have experienced spiritual healing
 - Therefore, Jesus is saying to this man that since he has been made well spiritually (as well as physically), he must live according to his salvation
 - As a result of receiving God’s mercy, the man is expected to live a new life without sinning
 - For if he continues in sin after becoming a child of God, he is at risk of the Lord bringing discipline upon him
 - Which could result in an even worse calamity than being a cripple
 - Then as a result of Jesus words to the man, we’re told in v.15 the man goes out proclaiming Jesus
 - Just as the Samaritan woman did
 - He has become a disciple of Jesus
- Now, John has set the scene for what follows between Jesus and the Pharisees
 - Disputes over the Sabbath are a central theme in all four Gospels
 - Across all Gospels, we find a total of seven disputes between Jesus and the Pharisees over the Sabbath
 - John’s Gospel records three of the seven moments
 - In this case, when the Pharisees learned that Jesus was the One who told the man to pick up his mat, they come after Him
 - This then leads us into the first of Jesus’ extended discourses in John’s Gospel
 - Jesus opens this discourse explaining how the Pharisees completely misunderstood the Sabbath and its purpose

[JOHN 5:17](#) But He answered them, “My Father is working until now, and I Myself am working.”

[JOHN 5:18](#) For this reason 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.

- First, Jesus says that His Father is working all the time, even until now
 - The Father rested from His work of Creation, but that doesn’t mean the Father ceased all work
 - The Father has remained at work in the lives of His people from the beginning
 - Simply maintaining the operation of the Universe is a constant work of God
 - The natural laws of the Universe that we observe are the result of God at work
 - The Bible says God is holding all things together and working according to His design
 - Jesus' point is that God can’t be accused of failing to rest on the Sabbath because God is free to work continually

- The Sabbath rest requirement was given by God to man so that man might benefit from it
- And the Pharisees also understood that God was not subject to the Sabbath day commandment
- And so that's where Jesus began in His defense
- But by calling God His Father and by saying He is likewise working as well, Jesus went a step further than the Pharisees could accept
 - In v.18 John says the Pharisees sought to kill Jesus all the more
 - John lists two reasons why Jesus upset them
- First, they said Jesus was breaking the Sabbath
 - Since Jesus existed in the form of man, He was subject to the Sabbath Law, just as Jesus kept all the Law
 - But Jesus wasn't breaking the Sabbath, not as God commanded it
 - Instead Jesus was breaking one of the Pharisees' stupid extra rules
 - In this case, the Pharisaical rule Jesus violated was a prohibition of carrying anything from a public space to a private space or from a private space to a public space
 - This was one of the many arbitrary rules that the Pharisees added to the commandment
 - When the cripple picked up his mat and moved it out of the portico, he was defying this rule
 - But these manmade rules were not in keeping with the spirit or purpose of the Law
 - The Sabbath was given to Israel to ensure a day each week without a need to work for their existence
 - Remember, in the desert the people of Israel were provided extra manna on the sixth day
 - And in the sixth year, the harvest was great enough to last two years
 - So the point was idleness; it was relaxing from the labors of subsisting
 - More importantly, the Sabbath was given to create a picture of Christ, Who fulfills the Sabbath in the New Covenant
 - Christ work on the cross brings us salvation, so we have no need to work for our own salvation
 - When we believe in Christ, we rest in His work and enter into His rest
 - So Jesus is our Sabbath fulfillment
 - Which is why the Christian is not required to keep a Sabbath day, since we have fulfilled the Sabbath requirement in coming to faith in Christ
- Secondly, they wanted to kill Jesus because He made Himself equal with God
 - Of course, all Jesus could say to this accusation was guilty as charged
 - Jesus was saying He was equal to God because He is
 - The Trinity is a basic doctrine of Christianity
 - This verse by itself is further proof that Jesus called Himself God and it refutes those who say otherwise
 - False teachers like the Jehovah's Witnesses will claim that Jesus never declared He was God

- And they will deny the Trinity
- But here is one of many places you can go in the New Testament to know the truth
- In response to the Pharisees anger, Jesus shares some details on the intimate relationship that Father and the Son share

[JOHN 5:19](#) Therefore Jesus 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.

[JOHN 5:20](#) “For the Father loves the Son, and shows Him all things that He Himself is doing; and the Father will show Him greater works than these, so that you will marvel.

[JOHN 5:21](#) “For just as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, even so the Son also gives life to whom He wishes.

[JOHN 5:22](#) “For not even the Father judges anyone, but He has given all judgment to the Son,

[JOHN 5:23](#) so that all will honor the Son even as they honor the Father. He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent Him.

- First, Jesus says the Son never acts apart from the Father, for they always act in unison
 - Jesus would never seek to do anything except what is the Father’s will
 - This is the definition of holiness and sinlessness
 - Doing everything and only what is the Father’s will
 - Everything single thing that Jesus did was perfectly in unison with the Father
 - So when Jesus told the man to pick up the mat, His instructions were perfectly consistent with the Father’s desires
 - In other words, what Jesus told the man to do was what the Father wanted done
 - And if the Father wanted it done, then by definition it couldn’t have been a violation of the Sabbath
 - And equally true, the Pharisees were sinning by demanding the man do otherwise
 - In effect Jesus explained that His instructions were in keeping with the Sabbath while the Pharisees’ were not
- The idea that Jesus submitted to the will of the Father leads some to question whether Jesus was truly God in the flesh
 - How could God submit to God, and so they conclude Jesus was just a man, a prophet, sent from God
 - In coming to this conclusion, they overlook the detail that Jesus followed perfectly
 - As Jesus said to the rich young ruler, no one is good but God alone

- The only way any man could follow in the Father's will perfectly is if He were sinless, as only God is
- So Jesus must be God to live a perfectly submitted life
- Nevertheless, because of His incarnate form, Jesus had to watch and learn from the Father in order to know what to do
 - This is probably the greatest mystery and most awe-inspiring aspect of the incarnation
 - Though He was God, Jesus experienced the process of learning, growing and maturing as a human being
 - As Jesus grew, He was always aware of His relationship to the Father
 - And He was constantly seeking to follow the Father and do only what pleased Him.
 - What a mystery that God could be confined to flesh and therefore required to learn and grow and yet still remained forever obedient and submitted.
- Next, Jesus says the Son is always in the loop, because the Father reveals all things to the Son out of love
 - The Son is on earth for a purpose and the Father never fails to instruct the Son on how to fulfill His mission to the Father's satisfaction
 - So the Son never acts out of disobedience
 - Nor does He ever act out of ignorance
 - He is perfectly in tune with the will of God in all things
 - And the things that the Father is willing to do out of love for the Son doesn't stop with human works
 - Jesus says the Father is prepared to show the Son even greater works than healing the physical body of a cripple
 - Beginning with future works of bringing men back to life and other great miracles
 - And culminating with His own resurrection and glorification
 - And continuing until today as Jesus brings new birth to all His children by faith
- Jesus' greatest miracle is His mission to save the lost, which He calls out in v.21
 - This claim wasn't novel, since the Jewish understanding acknowledged that God could and sometimes did raise dead bodies back to life
 - Resurrections had happened at many points in the Old Testament
 - The widow's son was raised by the prophet Elijah, for example
 - But now Jesus says He shared that same power, and He was prepared to grant it to whoever He wishes
 - When Jesus says that the Son gives life to whomever "He" wishes, the He is a reference back to the Father
 - We can see that from the context
 - The Father is the One raising people from the dead
 - And Jesus said He can do nothing on His own, but He only does what the Father is doing

- So when Jesus raises someone from the dead, He is raising those the Father wishes to raise
- Still, the point is that Jesus claims the same power as the Father in raising dead bodies back to life
- And this statement means Jesus is claiming to be God one area in which the Father had delegated all authority to the Son
- But there is one area in which the Father had delegated all authority to the Son
 - The Father has given the Son to right to judge all Creation
 - Peter declares the same thing in Acts

[ACTS 10:42](#) “And He ordered us to preach to the people, and solemnly to testify that this is the One who has been appointed by God as Judge of the living and the dead.

[ACTS 10:43](#) “Of Him all the prophets bear witness that through His name everyone who believes in Him receives forgiveness of sins.”

- Jesus was appointed to judge all things
 - The Pharisees who were seeking to kill Jesus were going to stand before Him in a future day and receive His righteous judgment
 - What a warning! Jesus is telling them one day I will judge you
 - Yet in the meantime He willingly suffers under their condemnation
 - I can't imagine the judgment these men faced
 - Then Jesus says in v.23 that the Father will ensure that all will honor the Son in the same way they have said to honor the Father
 - And if a person rejects the Son, that person is simultaneously rejecting the Father too
 - This is the natural conclusion from all that Jesus has stated
 - These men say they honor the Father, but their hearts are far from Him
 - And the proof of that is the way they reject the Son
 - But in the end, all men will honor the Son, as Paul says

[PHIL. 2:9](#) For this reason also, God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name,

[PHIL. 2:10](#) so that at the name of Jesus EVERY KNEE WILL BOW, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth,

[PHIL. 2:11](#) and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

- Here we find the exclusivity of Jesus position and Christianity's claims
 - The phrase “there are many roads to Heaven” is a popular way of saying that we don't all have to believe the same things about God in order to be accepted by Him

- Some can find “god” in following Muhammed
- Some find Him in following Buddha
- Some find Him in following Jesus
- And some find God in completely unique ways
- But Jesus’ words completely refute that notion
 - Jesus says that God is only found through the Son He sent
 - Jesus is the One and only Name with the power to save men from their sin
 - Any other belief is folly and will lead to disappointment
- We can’t say that Jesus is both a good person or consider Him to be one way to Heaven, because His own words preclude those conclusions
 - Either Jesus was lying or crazy
 - Because He said He was equal to God
 - He said to reject Him was to reject the Father
 - If Jesus was wrong, then there is no reason to consider anything else He said
 - Or He is right, in which case we can’t add any other name to our list of ways to Heaven
 - Those are the only two rational positions we can take on the question of how to consider Jesus
- At this point, you can imagine that Jesus’ words had His audience with mouths wide open gaping in either disbelief, astonishment or disgust
 - So Jesus begins to speak more forcefully about His authority

[JOHN 5:25](#) “Truly, truly, I say to you, an hour is coming and now is, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live.

[JOHN 5:26](#) “For just as the Father has life in Himself, even so He gave to the Son also to have life in Himself;

[JOHN 5:27](#) and He gave Him authority to execute judgment, because He is the Son of Man.

[JOHN 5:28](#) “Do not marvel at this; for an hour is coming, in which all who are in the tombs will hear His voice,

[JOHN 5:29](#) and will come forth; those who did the good deeds to a resurrection of life, those who committed the evil deeds to a resurrection of judgment.

[JOHN 5:30](#) “I can do nothing on My own initiative. As I hear, I judge; and My judgment is just, because I do not seek My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me.

- The voice of the Son of God is a life-giving power to the dead

- Jesus is speaking of two things at once in this statement
 - First, He's speaking to the miracles that He was preparing to work in raising people from the grave
 - People like Lazarus
 - But in spiritual terms, Jesus' voice would call many men and women to belief in Him as Messiah
 - And that belief raises these dead people to new life
 - Just as Jesus explained to the Pharisees Nicodemus
- The Son's ability to give life is equal to the Father's ability to give life
 - The Godhead is equal and the power of Creator is shared and equal
 - Just as we see in Genesis, when we read

[GEN. 1:26](#) Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness;...

- Once again, Jesus is calling Himself God, in that He can grant life to dead bodies and spirits
 - But He has also been granted the power to execute judgment
- So, we will either hear His voice for the outcome of obtaining eternal life
 - Or else we will hear His voice on a judgment day to come
 - And on that judgment day, we will not ignore Him, for we will receive the penalty for our sins
 - One way or another, we will hear His voice and obey
- From here, the conversation move to a comparison of life and judgment
 - In vs.28-29 Jesus explains that both these outcomes include a resurrection
 - In the first case, those who have heard His voice and did good are resurrected to life
 - In v.29 your Bible may contain the word "deeds" twice in this statement, but that word never appears in the original Greek language
 - That's important, because Jesus isn't saying that good deeds or evil deeds are the determiner for eternal life or judgment
 - Read the sentence without the word "deeds" and Jesus was saying that doing the good thing or the evil thing makes the difference
 - The good thing in this context is to hear the voice of the Son of Man and respond in a positive way
 - As did the cripple man, when He was told to get up and he obeyed
 - And later when He heard Jesus tell Him to go and sin no more, and the man believed in Jesus and was joyful
 - These are the ones who will be resurrected to eternal life
 - We who have believed in the name of the Son of Man will receive new bodies in a future day

- And with those new bodies, we will never die again
- We will live forever in His Kingdom of righteousness and glory
- On the other hand, the evil thing in this context would be to ignore the Lord's voice, to reject Him
 - But those who rejected Jesus as Lord will still be resurrected
 - They too will receive a new bodies
 - But in that new body, they will experience a judgment, which the Bible calls the second death
 - This is the eternal death that the Lord promised as wages for all those who sin
- We see these two moment juxtaposed in Revelation.

[REV. 20:4](#) Then I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was given to them. And I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded because of their testimony of Jesus and because of the word of God, and those who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received the mark on their forehead and on their hand; and they came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years.

[REV. 20:5](#) The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were completed. This is the first resurrection.

[REV. 20:6](#) Blessed and holy is the one who has a part in the first resurrection; over these the second death has no power, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with Him for a thousand years.

[REV. 20:11](#) Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat upon it, from whose presence earth and heaven fled away, and no place was found for them.

[REV. 20:12](#) And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne, and books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life; and the dead were judged from the things which were written in the books, according to their deeds.

[REV. 20:13](#) And the sea gave up the dead which were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead which were in them; and they were judged, every one of them according to their deeds.

[REV. 20:14](#) Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire.

- All believers are a part of the first resurrection, which occurs over a series of moments
 - And all unbelievers are a part of the second resurrection
 - The first leads into the Kingdom
 - While the second leads to the Lake of Fire

- Jesus then repeats in v.30 that He does nothing except what the Father wills, including the judgment that Jesus renders in this future moment
 - The Son's judgment will be the result of the Father's will
 - According to all that the Father has ordained, the Son must judge
 - Once again, the Son and Father are acting in unison in all matters
- To end the chapter, Jesus explains that the truth of His claims are corroborated in three ways
 - Jesus says that if He were making these statements with no other support, then we can be sure He was lying
 - People come with outlandish claims all the time
 - But they always lack the testimony of God to support their claims
 - But Jesus had supporting testimony from God
 - First, Jesus mentions that His testimony was backed by John the Baptist
 - John told the people of Jesus' coming, and so when Jesus arrived, John's testimony confirmed Jesus to be the One foretold
 - Jesus reminds the Pharisees that they sent to John as we saw in chapter 1
 - And when they inspected John, they could find nothing in His ministry to discredit him
 - But Jesus adds that he doesn't need the testimony of an earthly man to validate His ministry
 - Rather, Jesus says He mentioned John's testimony so that those who heard these words might be saved
 - Jesus wants the disciples, the readers and perhaps the Pharisees themselves to remember the words John spoke about Jesus, that He was the Lamb of God
 - And by that testimony to believe in Jesus
 - John was a light that was burning for a while, but as you we can tell from Jesus' words in v.35, John has died by this point
 - Secondly, Jesus claims are supporter by His miraculous works, which are a greater testimony than John's words in that they demonstrate the truth of His claims
 - There is no way to escape the truth of a miraculous healing
 - Or a person raised from the dead
 - As we said, it's telling that the Pharisees never cared to inspect the healing and rule on it
 - They skipped past that testimony because it was an inconvenient fact
 - If you accept that Jesus did the miracles the Gospel writers claim He did, then there is simply no getting around the fact that Jesus is God
 - For only the Creator can accomplish such things
- This will be a recurring theme in John's Gospel, that the religious leaders in Israel were lost in their sin and far from the Father

[JOHN 5:37](#) "And the Father who sent Me, He has testified of Me. You have neither heard His voice at any time nor seen His form.

[JOHN 5:38](#) “You do not have His word abiding in you, for you do not believe Him whom He sent.

[JOHN 5:39](#) “You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; it is these that testify about Me;

[JOHN 5:40](#) and you are unwilling to come to Me so that you may have life.

[JOHN 5:41](#) “I do not receive glory from men;

[JOHN 5:42](#) but I know you, that you do not have the love of God in yourselves.

[JOHN 5:43](#) “I have come in My Father’s name, and you do not receive Me; if another comes in his own name, you will receive him.

[JOHN 5:44](#) “How can you believe, when you receive glory from one another and you do not seek the glory that is from the one and only God?

[JOHN 5:45](#) “Do not think that I will accuse you before the Father; the one who accuses you is Moses, in whom you have set your hope.

[JOHN 5:46](#) “For if you believed Moses, you would believe Me, for he wrote about Me.

[JOHN 5:47](#) “But if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe My words?”

- Finally, Jesus offers the third and most powerful testimony that supports Jesus’ claims, and it’s the one these men rejected first and foremost
 - It’s the testimony of the word of God, the scriptures
 - Jesus says that the Father Himself has testified to Jesus.
 - But the Father’s voice has never been heard.
 - And the Father’s form has never been seen at any time.
 - The Father is all Spirit and cannot be seen nor heard according Jesus.
 - The Creation has only seen the Godhead in the form of the Second Person of the Godhead
 - So if no man has heard or seen the Father, how has the Father testified to the Son?
 - In v.38 Jesus says they don’t have the word of God abiding in them
 - The word of God is the testimony of the Father concerning the Son, Who is the Word
 - All the scriptures testify to Christ in one way or another
 - But these men do not have the word of God abiding in them
 - This statement must have been a true shock and completely offensive
 - These men prided themselves on being experts in the word of God
 - And yet they understood none of it
 - Which was proven in the fact that they were rejecting the very One that the scriptures testified about

- These men searched the scriptures in a pious and scrupulous fashion, but as if their eyes were closed the whole time
 - For spiritually, they did possess closed eyes
 - They read the words seeking an answer to how they can obtain eternal life, but didn't comprehend what they found
 - Eternal life isn't found in what we learn or what we do
 - It's found in the word of Christ
 - And so if you miss Christ in the word, you miss eternal life
 - These men couldn't see the true message of salvation in Christ which is contained throughout the Bible
 - So they were unwilling to come to Jesus for the eternal life He offers
- Without hesitation, Jesus labels them out as unbelieving men
 - He says He knows them, and therefore He knows that the love of God is not in them
 - That phrase is one that must have made an impression on John, because John uses this phrase in various ways in his letters
 - These men were seeking only for the glory that comes from other men
 - They were interested in receiving the praise of other men for their piety and zealously
 - So they did all that they did for the praise of others
 - They would receive a man as an authority in the faith based on the name of a man
 - Meaning they would give honor to pedigree and association
 - The right teacher would grant a man an audience
 - But when Jesus comes in the authority and name of the Father, they reject Him
 - Which proves their hearts to be about pride and not love
 - And Jesus says that the one who accuses them before the Father is not Jesus personally, but rather it's the word of God
 - Moses accuses them in the sense that the Law convicts them for their sin
 - And more generally, the word of God, which is a testimony of the Father, testifies against these hypocrites
- Remember how the chapter began with a man healed merely by the word of Christ
 - The cripple started as like the Pharisees, believing in myths and manmade rules
 - Looking for supernatural displays and signs
 - Trying to save himself by his own power
 - But unable to do so
 - But then Jesus entered and by His word granted the man a healing that only God can work
 - The healing came by the power of Christ's word
 - And that healing testified to Christ's identity as Messiah

- The crippled man got it
- The Pharisees did not
- And the difference was the Word