



**Sunday School Lesson for January 14, 2007
Released on January 10, 2007**

"Jesus is Authority and Judge"

**Printed Text: John 5:19-29
Background Scripture: John 5:19-29
Devotional Reading: 2 Timothy 4:1-5**

John 5:19–29

19 Then answered Jesus and said unto them, Verily, verily, 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.

20 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.

21 For as the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth them; even so the Son quickeneth whom he will.

22 For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son:

23 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.

24 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.

25 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.

26 For as the Father hath life in himself; so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself;

27 And hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man.

28 Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice,

29 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.

Lesson Aims

After participating in this lesson, each student will be able to:

1. Describe the authority that Jesus has.
2. Discuss how Jesus expects us to live in this world in anticipation of eternity.
3. Write a plan to honor Jesus' authority in one specific way.

Lesson Background

Our text today follows the story of the healing at Bethesda (John 5:1–9). While in Jerusalem for a feast (v. 1), Jesus visited a pool where many sick people gathered for medical care. There He met a man who had been lame for 38 years. To the great surprise of the crowd—and especially to the surprise of the man himself—Jesus commanded him to rise, take his cot, and walk.

The miracle generated controversy, however, because it took place on the Sabbath. That was the weekly day of rest, when Jews were not permitted to work (v. 9). Some Jewish authorities who believed that carrying cots and healing were works prohibited on the Sabbath confronted the man and learned what Jesus had done.

When those authorities challenged Jesus, He justified His actions by noting God's power at work (v. 17). If God chooses to work on the Sabbath, who can object? The Jews considered this blasphemous. So they conspired to kill Jesus for "making himself equal with God" (v. 18). Jesus' comments in our printed text are a response to this persecution.

The Father and the Son (John 5:19-23)

1. Why did the Jews become upset when Jesus said He was working in the same way as His Father?

Jesus stated that He was working just as His Father was working. Here, Jesus was not only claiming that He was claiming equality with God, but He also claimed to have the authority of God. Jewish leaders considered His statement to be blasphemy, which in their belief required Jesus to be put to death (cf. Deut. 13:1-5). Jesus amplified his claim in verse 19 when He further based His authority on His relationship with God by saying He did everything the same way as His Father that He could do nothing on his own.

2. Why did the Jews disagree with the idea that Jesus had authority from God higher than theirs?

Kenneth Gangel observed, "The equality factor explodes in dimensions the Jews must have found mind-boggling. Jesus, equal in nature with God; His goals, identical with God's goals; His will, only subordinate so that people through Him could see the Father" (Anders, ed., Holman New Testament Commentary, Broadman & Holman). Romans ruled in Jesus' day. For the Romans, religious activity meant very little. The Jews' highest authority, however, was their religion. Jesus was challenging them at the heart of their beliefs.

In the minds of the Jews in Jesus' day, the highest authority rested in their religious leaders. When Jesus explained His Sabbath actions on the basis of a higher authority than theirs, they reacted instantly and negatively. Furthermore, Jesus claimed that God loved Him (His Son) and revealed to Him everything He was doing. This claim of unity meant that Jesus was only doing what God wanted done.

3. Why did the Jews have no problem hearing that God gives life?

The Old Testament gives lots of examples of how God has the power to give life. Starting at creation in Genesis, God has demonstrated his power to give life throughout time. Since the Jews were well acquainted with the Old Testament scriptures, they had no problem hearing that God can give life. Even the prophet Isaiah had written, "Thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise. Awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust: for thy dew is as the dew of the herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead" (Isa. 26:19). They did have a problem with another claim of equality with God by Jesus; they heard Jesus could give life to whomever He chose.

4. What makes it especially meaningful to us to know that Jesus gives life too? (v. 21)

Jesus has stated that He gives life. What is especially precious to us is the fact that Jesus gives spiritual as well as physical life. Only through Jesus can we be assured of heaven and eternal life with the Father. It is through Jesus that everyone can have eternal life and be assured of spending eternity in heaven with the Father.

5. What did Jesus claim regarding His authority to judge? (v. 22)

In verse 22, Jesus claimed that the Father committed all judgment unto Him (the Son). Jesus not only claimed that he has the authority to judge all things, but He also claimed that the Father does not judge anyone but instead given the Son the right to all judgment. This also emphasizes the equality of the Father and the Son.

Psalm 9:7-8 shows that God is the Judge: "But the Lord shall endure for ever: he hath prepared his throne for judgment. And he shall judge the world in righteousness, he shall minister judgment to the people in uprightnessness."

Jeremiah described a different situation when he wrote, "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth. In his days, Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely; and this is his name whereby he shall be called, THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS" (Jer. 23:5-6).

6. Why did He say that it is important to recognize His equality with God? (v.23)

It is very important to recognize Jesus' equality with His Father and His authority to judge. He states that if anyone does not honor the Son, then they do not honor the Father as well. They are the same being. One has to either love both or hate both. The Apostle Paul wrote in Philippians 2:9-11 that one day every knee will bow and acknowledge the supremacy of Jesus Christ. That follows this life. It is much better to acknowledge Him willingly than to be forced to acknowledge Him in judgment.

People and the Son (John 5:24-29)

7. What is the significance of Jesus' words " verily, verily" (John 5:24)?

The Greek words that begin this paragraph are amen, amen, which has been translated, "verily, verily." These words serve to emphasize the certainty of the next statement. When Jesus says "verily, verily" in scripture, we can be certain that the statement that follows will come to pass. When we read His statement, we realize that the entire gospel is given here, much as it is given in John 3:16.

8. What certain truth did Jesus say about believing in Him? (v. 25)

Jesus states in verse 25 that anyone who hears His words and believes in the God who sent Him will be guaranteed eternal life, which will result in escape from condemnation. The wording of salvation usually emphasizes believing in Christ rather than the Father. Since Jesus had been referring to His unity with the Father, it is understandable that He would say belief in the Father will result in eternal life. The Father and the Son are so completely united that to genuinely believe in one is to believe in the other.

9. What event takes place when people believe in Christ Jesus? (v. 24-25)

The phrase, "is passed from death unto life" (5:24) becomes even more important when we understand that in the Greek text, the perfect tense is used here. That means a completed action took place somewhere in the past but has continuing results. By believing in Christ Jesus as our personal Savior, we passed from death to life, and we remain there.

As Paul wrote, sin came into the world by one man, so death came upon all men, those who have sinned (basically everybody) (Rom. 5:12). Before salvation, we have no spiritual life. Paul also wrote that "the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord" (6:23). Spiritual life comes from believing in Jesus Christ. At the moment of our belief, we leave the realm of death and enter the realm of life. This spiritual life is the same as everlasting (or eternal) life.

Once again, Jesus uttered a truth that can be trusted: there is a time—in fact, it had already begun—when those who are spiritually dead would hear His voice and live. This is the meaning we get from the little phrase "and now is" (John 5:25). The context is Jesus' ability to give life, not the future resurrection that will lead to judgment. It is true that in the future the physically dead will hear His voice and come alive again. In the present, however, the spiritually dead can hear and receive eternal life.

10. What did Jesus say about resurrection? Who is going to be there, and what are the destinations? (v. 28-29)

Jesus speaks of a future event in these verses, as opposed to what He seemed to refer to as something present in the phrase "and now is" in verse 25. A physical resurrection is coming that will involve every person who has ever lived on this earth. This refutes any teaching that death is a finality of all things. There is life beyond this earthly existence. Two resurrections are mentioned in Jesus' words: a resurrection of life and a resurrection of damnation. Not everyone goes to heaven; in fact, more people will miss heaven than find it (cf. Mat. 7:13-14).

One resurrection leads to heaven. This resurrection is where all believers will go. These individuals have a relationship with God through His Son, Jesus. The other resurrection leads to damnation. This resurrection involves unbelievers, that is, those who have not received Jesus Christ as Savior. It will be a just judgment, for God is just (cf. Gen 18:25).

Everyone is going to face God at some point. When Jesus says that those who “have done good” (John 5:29), He is referring to those who have believed in Jesus and trusted Him for salvation. This is the only real “good” that anyone can do, because goodness and good works do not earn heaven. Isaiah states that our righteousness is nothing but filthy rags (64:6). Those who “have done evil” are those without Christ.

Perhaps no other passage in the Bible relays so efficiently the seriousness of the decision we make regarding who Jesus is and what He came to do. Jesus came to earth for the purpose of dying in payment of our sins. “But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name” (1:12). It is a serious matter to not believe. Jesus came the first time as Savior; He will come again as Lord and Judge.

Conclusion - Don't Argue with the Judge

A good friend of ours is a police captain. I once asked him what we should do if a policeman came to our house or we were stopped for a traffic violation. He said, “In one word, ‘cooperate.’ You’re not going to argue with a cop, so don’t.” My wife very recently profited from this advice when she parked momentarily in a fire lane to pick up a large item in a store. A police officer came in looking for her, and she avoided an expensive fine by listening quietly and following his orders.

Jesus offers similar advice in our passage today. God is the boss, and He has given Jesus all authority to judge us. We’re not in a position to argue with Him or to question what He says. If we want to stay out of trouble, our only hope is simply to follow His instructions. Make no mistake: there won’t be any arguing about the situation on Judgment Day!

But people foolishly try to argue with God, don’t they? Such arguments can take several forms. The most serious way we argue with God is through sin itself. God, the judge and lawgiver, has defined what sin is. He has commanded us to avoid it. When we go ahead and commit sin anyway, we are saying, in effect, “I know better than You do, God.” Thus our sin becomes our argument against Him and His will.

Such sin is obvious when we break one of the “Thou shalt not” commandments. A less obvious way to argue with God is in resisting His will for us after we become Christians. Jonah knew God’s direction for his life but chose to do something different (Jonah 1:3). Is God calling you into a particular ministry or service? Don’t argue—go!

Prayer

Father, let us remember to be grateful of your Son’s sacrifice for our sins. Help us to remember that although Jesus is our Savior, He is our Lord. May we not take advantage of your Son’s sacrifice and strengthen us to live according to your will. In Jesus’ name, amen.

Thought to Remember

We experience the blessings of resurrection life in every moment that we honor Christ.

Anticipating Next Week’s Lesson

Jesus is exactly what all people need. Next week’s lesson explores Him as the Bread of life and the living Water. Read John 6:34-40 and 7:37-39

Lesson Summarized By

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