

CHAPTER FIVE

This chapter is the really great chapter on the deity of Jesus. Here He brings to testify undeniable witnesses to His Sonship. In this chapter we also see the first of open controversy on the part of the Jewish rulers. In connection with this we have included a Special Study on "Controversies and Objections in Jesus' Ministry," by Seth Wilson at the end of this chapter.

Between the incidents in Cana of Galilee (chapter 4) and His return to Jerusalem for the unnamed feast of 5:1, Jesus carried on a considerable ministry in Galilee. He returned to His home town Nazareth, preached in the synagogue, and was rejected (Lk. 4); He called the four fishermen the second time and healed many (Mt. 4; Mk. 1; Lk. 5); He made a Galilean tour among great crowds (Mt. 4; Mk. 1; Lk. 5); He healed a leper (Mt. 8); a paralytic (Mt. 9); called Matthew (Mt. 9); and ran into controversies about eating and fasting (Mt. 9; Mk. 2; Lk. 5). See Map No. 3 page 170.

We outline the fifth chapter of John as follows:

- II The Word Manifested to the Jews and Their Rejection of Him, 1:19-12:50 (cont'd)
 - C. Public Ministry — Second Year 5:1-47
 - 1. Open controversy begins
 - a. A helpless man healed 5:1-9
 - b. Sabbath controversy 5:10-18
 - 2. Jesus claims deity
 - a. The deity stated 5:19-23
 - b. Powers inherent in that deity 5:24-29
 - 3. Jesus gives evidence for His deity
 - a. Jesus' own witness 5:30-32
 - b. John the Baptist's witness 5:33-35
 - c. The Father's witness 5:36-38
 - d. The witness of the Scriptures 5:39-47

THE GOSPEL OF JOHN
A HELPLESS MAN HEALED*Text 5:1-9*

1 After these things there was a feast of the Jews; and Jesus went up to Jerusalem.

2 Now there is in Jerusalem by the sheep gate a pool, which is called in Hebrew Bethesda, having five porches.

3 In these lay a multitude of them that were sick, blind, halt, withered.

5 And a certain man was there, who had been thirty and eight years in his infirmity.

6 When Jesus saw him lying, and knew that he had been now a long time in that case, he saith unto him, Wouldest thou be made whole?

7 The sick man answered him, Sir, I have no man, when the water is troubled, to put me into the pool: but while I am coming, another steppeth down before me.

8 Jesus saith unto him, Arise, take up thy bed, and walk.

9 And straightway the man was made whole, and took up his bed and walked. Now it was the sabbath on that day.

Queries

- a. Why were the people gathered at this pool?
- b. Why would Jesus ask such an obvious question?
- c. What did the man mean by "when the water is troubled"?

Paraphrase

After a considerable ministry in Galilee, there was the (Pass-over) feast of the Jews, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. Now there is a pool in Jerusalem near the sheep gate which is called in Hebrew, Bethesda, having five covered porches. In these porches lay great crowds of sick people, some blind, some crippled and some shrunken and emaciated. There was a certain man there having had a lingering illness for thirty-eight years. Jesus, seeing him lying there, and knowing that for a long time he had been an invalid, said to him, Do you want to be made healthy? The sick man answered, Sir, I have no one to put me into the pool when the water is troubled, and when I try by myself to get down to the pool another person steps down to it before me. Jesus said to him, Arise! take up your pallet and walk. Immediately the man became well, and took up his pallet and walked. But that day was a Sabbath day!

Summary

Jesus heals a helpless man who was hopelessly ill and manifests His deity. But it was performed on the Sabbath, and the Jews will attack Him for breaking the Sabbath.

Comment

What feast is this? There is great diversity of opinion among scholars. Andrews, Hendriksen, and Foster, among others, hold that it is probably the Passover. It cannot be Purim, for Jesus would hardly celebrate such a riotous, unspiritual festival as Purim. Furthermore, Purim came sometime in February and would not allow sufficient time for the early ministry in Galilee. Jesus arrived in Galilee in December (four months before harvest). The feasts of Tabernacles and of Dedication are ruled out because they come in October and December respectively. Were this feast either of these two, it would allow only four or six months for the later great Galilean ministry. It is extremely improbable that all the events which transpired in this great Galilean ministry took place in only four to six months. Between the two feasts (John 5 and John 6), Jesus traveled extensively in Galilee. He returned to Capernaum from Jerusalem, went into the mountains and delivered the Sermon on the Mount, healed the Centurion's servant, went to Nain, returned to Capernaum, toured the cities and villages of Galilee, crossed the Sea of Galilee to Gergesa, recrossed the sea, went to Nazareth, toured again the cities and villages of Galilee, and finally crossed the sea to Bethsaida for the sermon on the Bread of Life after feeding the five thousands. See Map No. 3, page 170, for an outline of this great Galilean ministry.

This feast could be either Passover or Pentecost (50 days after Passover), but hardly any of the other feasts will fit the chronology. Passover makes more allowance for the subsequent ministry in Galilee. As R. C. Foster says, "The identification of the feast is a decisive factor in determining the length of Jesus' ministry. If it was the Passover, then there are four Passovers in the ministry of Jesus which must have lasted through three years and a fraction."

Verse two also poses its problems: (a) There is no word in the original for the word gate. Literally, this verse would be translated, “. . . there is in Jerusalem by the (place or thing) belonging to the sheep, a pool . . .”. Some have surmised the *probatikos* (place belonging to the sheep) to be a sheep-gate, others a sheep-market, still others a sheep-pool. It is difficult to determine just what John speaks of when he says “the place belonging to the sheep.” Most scholars claim that sheep-gate is the meaning, since Nehemiah 3:32 and 12:39 mentions a sheep-gate. This gate would depend for its location upon the location of the pool of Bethesda. (b) Various names have been given this pool. The word for pool comes from *kolumbethra*, and means a pool large enough to swim in. Some manuscripts have Bethesda (House of Mercy), some have Bethzatha (House of the Olive), and others have Bethsaida. Bethesda fits the evident use made of

POOLS OF JERUSALEM

1. Upper Gihon
2. Lower Gihon
3. Pool of Hezekiah
4. Jeremiah's Pool
5. Pool of Lady Mary (Bethesda?)
6. Church of St. Anne
7. Pool of Israel
8. St. Stephen's Gate
9. Virgin's Pool (Bethesda?)
10. Pool of Siloam
11. Job's Well

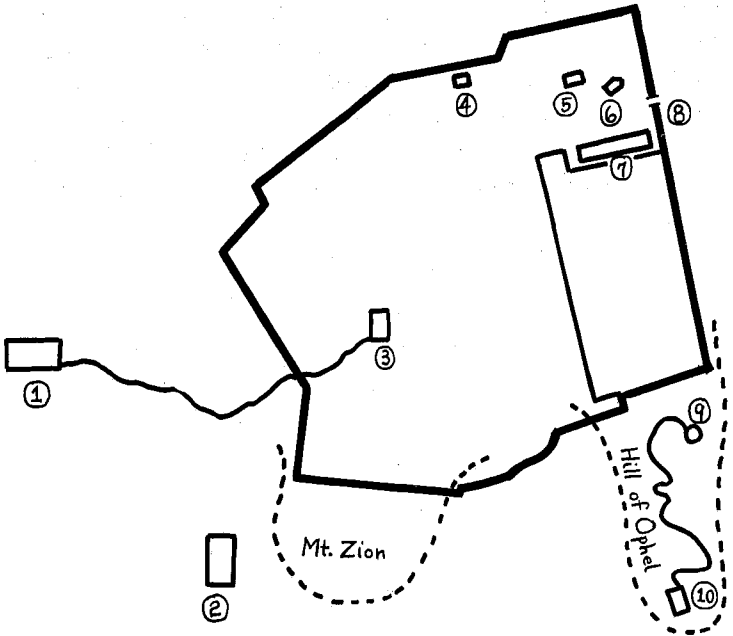


Fig. No. 1

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this pool. Certain archaeologists locate the pool just inside the gate of St. Stephen (on the east wall, just north of the temple area); Robertson and Foster claim Bethesda to be none other than the Virgin's Pool. See Figure No. 1, page 175. The reason for associating Bethesda with the Virgin's Pool is that the latter periodically bubbles over from a natural spring, which also forms a sort of natural syphon. It is called "the Gusher." The Virgin's Pool is south of the Temple, on the east side of the Hill of Ophel. The bubbling nature of the Virgin's Pool might account for the man's description in verse 7. On the other hand, the former pool (north, near St. Stephen's gate) has in its favor the recent discovery of five arches seemingly indicating the five porches, and a fresco depicting the troubling of the water by an angel. (c) These five porches were ancient versions of present day hospital wards. The sick were brought on their stretcher-pallet beds and laid there. There were no nurses, and it seems as if every man was left to care for himself. In Palestine then, as in most Asian countries now, the incapacitated were the cast-offs of society. Their only means of livelihood was begging or stealing.

In these five porticoes lay crowds of sick people. What man could walk among these helpless, hopeless masses and not have compassion upon them? How the Lord's heart must have gone out to the multitudes, but, as far as we know, He healed only one man. The infirm here are classed in three sicknesses; blind, crippled and withered (shrunken or shriveled — a sort of paralysis).

The latter half of verse 3 and all of verse 4 (as they appear in the King James Version) have been omitted in the American Standard Version. All the most ancient and best manuscripts omit these verses. And now we have further evidence in the Bodmer Papyrus II for their omission, for this very ancient Codex also omits John 5:3b-4. See our Introduction for the value of the Bodmer Papyrus.

Verse 5 tells us that the man had suffered thirty-eight long years. We wonder how long he must have lain in one of the five porches trying to get someone to help him down to the pool. How would he survive? What a bitter cup to drink! Some commentators guess that the man's infirmity was due to "youthful excesses" (cf. v. 14). We wonder why Jesus healed only one man from such a multitude. We can only guess, but the severe

hopelessness and helplessness of the case offers Jesus an opportunity to demonstrate His great power.

Singling out this man, Jesus asks him a most obvious question. We are told that Jesus knew the man had been a long time infirm. John does not tell us how He knew, but what need is there to conjecture when He Himself knew "what was in man." Could He not know this by reason of His omniscient nature? Jesus' question to the man is probably to call the attention of the crowd to the miracle He is about to perform. The Lord's question was also to arouse hope in the heart of the man, but the man is resigned to hopelessness. The man's answer seems to say, "Sir, it is not a question of whether I want to be healed or not, but it is a question of opportunity or inopportunity."

Although verses 3b and 4 seem to be the invention of some scribe who inserted them in late manuscripts, verse 7 tells us the water was disturbed in some manner. The man felt there was some therapeutic value in the bubbling water. This should present no problem, for today we have our "whirlpool baths," and our mineral springs, etc. This invalid's problem was that no one would help him into the pool. The word he used for put is *ballo*, and usually means to throw. Perhaps the man means he has no one to take him, even roughly if need be, and roll him off his pallet into the pool. Whatever be the case it is plain that the man expresses no faith. As Lenski says, "Here is a plain instance where the miracle precedes the faith . . ."

It is strange to some commentators that Jesus would heal anyone without some evidence of faith. What of the widow's son at Nain — of Lazarus — of Jairus' daughter? After Jesus commanded the man, "Get up, pick up your pallet and walk," verse 9 informs us the man was made whole immediately. John's use of the particular adverb "straightway" seems to indicate his desire to emphasize the immediacy of the miracle. Note also the completeness of the cure. An invalid who had not walked in thirty-eight years arises to walk at once. There is no experimenting, no learning all over to walk again.

The last phrase of verse 9, "Now it was the Sabbath on that day," is very significant. Surely Jesus knew of the absurdly strict Sabbath laws of the Pharisees. Why then would He open Himself to controversy by commanding this man to carry his bed on the Sabbath? We should like to quote here a paragraph from R. C. Foster's *Studies in the Life of Christ*, Vol. 1, page 246.

“Why did Jesus heal the man on the Sabbath day, if He knew it would bring such bitter criticism upon Him? Jesus made a deliberate choice in the whole matter as to the man and the time, for He approached the man, and He commanded the man to take up his bed and carry it home, even though He knew that the sight of this man carrying such a burden through the Sabbath day crowds which thronged the temple would create controversy. The difference in the methods of Jesus is most pronounced: in Galilee, where such intense excitement prevailed over His ministry that it threatened to get out of hand, He counseled a leper to tell no one of his cure; here in Jerusalem which was so full of hostility on the part of leaders that even the people who favored Him only dared to talk of Him in whispers, Jesus boldly threw down the gauntlet to the cold and callous unbelief of the leaders by sending this man right through their midst on the Sabbath day carrying his bed in proof of the miracle. Moreover, Jesus did not attempt to hide behind the man when the storm of criticism arose. The man evidently acted in harmony with the will of Jesus when he immediately reported to the Pharisees who had cured him. This completed the testimony of the man to them concerning the miracle.”

In addition to the external evidence (omission in oldest manuscripts), there are three internal reasons for rejecting the spurious verses 3b and 4: (a) Miracles of the Bible are always connected inseparably with the gospel message. Neither Jesus nor the apostles healed primarily to relieve suffering. As R. C. Foster points out, the best way to show the unscriptural nature of modern faith-healers is to point to the fact that there are a great number of religious sects claiming to heal — yet they teach absolutely contradictory doctrines. If their so-called miracles are genuine, they make God the author of division, confusion, and thus a liar. Miraculous healing by the waters of a pool, without a gospel message, is unscriptural. (b) If people had actually been healed by the pool, then only the rich and the strongest would have been able to obtain. This also contradicts the tenor of Scripture. (c) Again Foster points out, “Four hundred years of silence concerning miracles since the close of the Old Testament emphasizes the miracles of Jesus.” Not even the great man who came in the “spirit and power of Elijah” worked miracles. If miracles were being worked by a pool of water before and during Jesus’ ministry, this emphasis is lost.

Quiz

1. What feast of the Jews is referred to in 5:1? Give reasons for your answer.
2. What does the identification of this feast have to do with Jesus' ministry?
3. Which pool of Jerusalem today is more likely to be the pool of Bethesda?
4. Give 4 reasons why verses 3b and 4 are not a part of the inspired record of John.
5. What measure of faith in Jesus Christ did this man have before his healing?
6. Why did Jesus choose the Sabbath day to perform this miracle?

SABBATH CONTROVERSY

Text 5:10-18

10 So the Jews said unto him that was cured, It is the sabbath, and it is not lawful for thee to take up thy bed.

11 But he answered them, He that made me whole, the same said unto me, Take up thy bed, and walk.

12 They asked him, Who is the man that said unto thee, Take up thy bed, and walk?

13 But he that was healed knew not who it was; for Jesus had conveyed himself away, a multitude being in the place.

14 Afterward Jesus findeth him in the temple, and said unto him, Behold, thou art made whole: sin no more, lest a worse thing befall thee.

15 The man went away, and told the Jews that it was Jesus who made him whole.

16 And for this cause the Jews persecuted Jesus, because he did these things on the sabbath.

17 But Jesus answered them, My Father worketh even until now, and I work.

18 For this cause therefore the Jews sought the more to kill him, because he not only brake the sabbath, but also called God his own Father, making himself equal with God.

Queries

- a. Why did the Jews ask the man about his Healer?
- b. What prompted the man to tell the Jews that Jesus healed him?
- c. What does Jesus mean by the word working in verse 17?

Paraphrase

But the Jews told the man that had been healed over and over again, Today is the Sabbath day and it is not permissible according to law for you to take up your stretcher. The man answered, The Man Who made me well, that Man spoke authoritatively and told me, Lift up your stretcher and walk. The Jews asked him, Just Who is this fellow Who told you to take up your stretcher and walk? But the man did not know Who his benefactor was, for Jesus had quietly slipped away unnoticed because there was a great crowd there. Afterwards Jesus finds the man in the temple and says to him, Look! You are well, stop sinning lest a worse thing come upon you. The man went away and said to the Jews, It is Jesus of Nazareth who made me well! Now because of this the Jews stalked Jesus to persecute Him because He was doing these things on the Sabbath. But Jesus replied, My Father is working even now on the Sabbath and therefore I also am working. On account of this the Jews were more determined to kill Him because He not only violated the Sabbath traditions but He also said God was His own unique Father, making Himself equal with God.

Summary

The Jews discover that Jesus healed the man and also commanded the man to break their Sabbath traditions. They increase their hate and determination to kill Jesus, for He has made Himself equal with Jehovah God.

Comment

Sabbath laws are legislated in Exodus 20:10; 23:12; 31:12-17; Jer. 17:21 (cf. also Neh. 13:15). An example of punishment for Sabbath breaking is found in Num. 15:32-36. Rabbinical tradition said one who inadvertently carried a burden on the Sabbath could sacrifice for his sin. But wilful disobedience brought interdict and death by stoning. These Jews cared not a bit that the man had been relieved of his long and helpless condition. As we

have commented before (3:1), the Pharisees had added manifold and ridiculously impractical regulations to Sabbath-keeping laws. Their purpose, of course, was to make a system of meritorious law-keeping, hoping thereby to attain righteousness. Mercy and love upon a hopelessly ill man was beside the point with them — someone had broken the Sabbath traditions and he must be punished. Jesus told the Pharisees later that they neglected the essential matters of the Law such as justice, and mercy, and faith (cf. Mt. 23:23-24).

The man did not even so much as know Jesus' name. But verse 11 gives us insight into the man's attitude. The Jews have attacked him for violating the Sabbath, but the man points out to the Jews that the Man who healed him had told him to take up his bed. It is not that the man is seeking to lay the blame on Jesus, but he thinks the Jews ought to see that if a Man was able to miraculously heal him, that same Man ought to be able to give commands concerning the Sabbath!

Contemptuously, in verse 12, the Jews asked the man, "Just Who is this fellow that told you to pick up your bed?" The Jews undoubtedly knew who the "Healer" was. They probably asked His name to get legal testimony to use against Him later. Who else was traversing Palestine healing the sick and restoring sight to the blind? The rulers of the Jews were not above reverting to deceit!

But the man could not answer (v. 13), for Jesus had silently glided from the midst of the great multitude gathered there. The word *exeneusen* comes from a Greek word which means to swim, glide, float. The crowd was the reason for Jesus' departure. The Lord's action here certainly shows that His primary mission was higher than the mere healing of every infirm body. Notice also from this instance that Jesus is able to heal even when the person does not know Him as Christ.

The present tense of the verb *finds* in verse 14 seems to indicate that Jesus was looking for the man. Now we see His higher purpose for this man — the healing of the man's soul. Most commentators think this verse indicates the man's illness was due to his previous sinful life. All sickness, however, is not the result of personal sin; but much sickness can be logically and scientifically traced to indulgence and immorality. Jesus uses the present tense again (continued action tense) when He says "Do not continue sinning." If this man now wilfully continues

in sin something worse than thirty-eight years of infirmity will befall him — he will be lost forever in the abyss of Hell to suffer eternal and excruciating punishment.

There are two views as to the man's running to the Jews upon discovering Jesus' name: (a) The man sought to clear himself with the authorities. He felt if Jesus had the power to heal, He also had authority to issue commands to break the Sabbath traditions. The man may have been referring the Jews to Jesus in all innocence. He could not defend his actions, but Jesus could! (b) He was ignorant of their intense hatred and determination to kill Jesus and unwittingly betrayed Jesus. Whatever the situation, the man's actions must have conformed to the purposes of Jesus for He did not chastize the man.

The antagonism of the Jews toward Jesus really began in 2:13, and was fanned by His increasing popularity in 4:1. But now it turns into a white-hot hate. They stalk Him like wild beasts of prey (indicated by the verb *ediokon*). Henceforth they will pursue His every move, seeking occasion to trap Him and do away with Him (cf. Mk. 2:23-3:2).

Jesus' answer (v. 17) definitely shows His recognition of Sonship early. In performing this work of mercy on the Sabbath, He is merely doing what His very own Father-God is continuing to do each day of the week (Sabbath included). The Father causes the rain to fall, the sun to shine and the grain to grow on the Sabbath as well as on Monday or Friday. Jesus, being equally a part of the Godhead, works also on the Sabbath. What a strange paradoxical contrast! The Jews, by placing legalistic prohibitions against work on the Sabbath, put a heavy yoke of meritorious work upon the necks of the people which they were not able to bear. Jesus, on the other hand, by doing works of mercy and love, found the genuine rest and peace in doing the will of the Father! As the Pharisees understood it, man was created to be a keeper of Sabbath laws — Jesus knew the truth that the Sabbath was made for man (cf. Mk. 2:27).

Give the Jews credit for more intellectual honesty than some of our modern "scholars." The Jews at least understood Jesus' claim of equality with God, and they saw the alternatives. Either Jesus was telling truth and must be worshipped as God, or He was a blasphemer worthy of death. Some of our modern "Doctors of Divinity" would have us believe Jesus' claims for equality with God to be a philosophy evolving from the second century church.

The word *equal* in this verse comes from the Greek word *isos*. The Anglicized form of this word is used in the English language as a prefix meaning equal. Thus, an isosceles triangle is a triangle with two equal sides. Paul used the same word (*isos*) in Philippians 2:6 where Jesus, "existing in the form of God, counted not the being on an equality with God a thing to be grasped . . ."

Quiz

1. What does the Law of Moses legislate concerning the Sabbath?
2. Why would the man think Jesus had authority to command him to take up his bed on the Sabbath?
3. What was Jesus' higher purpose in seeking the man in the temple?
4. How does the Father "work until now"?
5. What is the difference between Jesus' view of the Sabbath and the view of the Jews?

THE DEITY STATED

Text 5:19-23

19 Jesus therefore answered and said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father doing: for what things so ever he doeth, these the Son also doeth in like manner.

20 For the Father loveth the Son, and showeth him all things that himself doeth: and greater works than these will he show him, that ye may marvel.

21 For as the Father raiseth the dead and giveth them life, even so the Son also giveth life to whom he will.

22 For neither doth the Father judge any man, but he hath given all judgment unto the Son;

23 that all may honor the Son, even as they honor the Father. He that honoreth not the Son honoreth not the Father that sent him.

Queries

- a. What are the "greater works" of verse 20?
- b. To whom does the Son give life?
- c. What is the significance of honoring the Son?

Paraphrase

So Jesus answered the Jews, saying, I tell you truly, The Son is not able to do anything of His Own accord, but He does only those things which He sees the Father doing; for whatever the Father is doing, these things also the Son is doing in like manner. The Father loves the Son and discloses to the Son everything which He Himself is doing; and the Father will disclose greater works than these which you have just seen. He will disclose these greater works to the Son in order that you may be caused to wonder. Just as the Father raises the dead and makes them live, so also the Son gives life to whomever He wills. Furthermore, the Father judges no one; but He has given all the prerogatives of judgment unto the Son in order that all men may honor and worship the Son just as they honor and worship the Father. The man who does not honor and worship the Son does not honor and worship the Father Who sent the Son.

Summary

Jesus claims equality with the Father, and bases His claim upon His power to give life and His authority to judge.

Comment

Jesus' answer to the Jews' accusation that He makes Himself equal to God is "Yes, absolutely yes." His answer is a tremendously daring claim that He does exactly what God does. He said much the same in 5:30; 7:28; 8:28; 14:10, and already implied it in 5:17. Unless He sees the Father doing something, He does not do it. Although He is on earth, Jesus is aware constantly of what the Father wishes to have done, and He fulfills only what is the Father's will (cf. Mt. 11:27; Jn. 8:29). Whatever Jesus does emanates from the Father. When, therefore, the Jews attacked Him for breaking their Sabbath traditions, they were in reality declaring war on God. Notice here that the Son sees all that the Father does; in the next verse (v. 20), the Father shows the Son all that He is doing. There is absolute harmony and oneness.

Verse 20 shows the active part of the Father in this relationship. The Father is not passive — He does not merely allow Jesus to discover what He can of the Father's will, but the Father discloses His will to the Son. Jesus then tells His enemies of the greater works the Father will show them. If the Jews are aston-

ished at the healing of a helpless invalid, they will be caused to wonder even more at the greater works to come. What are these greater works? Some think (a) Jesus refers only to the general resurrection and judgment; (b) others, that He speaks of specific resurrections, e.g., Lazarus, the widow's son, etc., plus the final resurrection of all and the judgment; (c) still others, that He refers to the raising of the spiritually dead, the raising of the bodily dead, and the judgment. The last interpretation seems to be more compatible with the entire context. It is interesting to note the promise of Jesus to the disciples (Jn. 14:12) that they shall do even greater works than Christ in His earthly ministry. Did not their tremendously fruitful labors in giving life to dead souls overshadow the Lord's restoring life to mortal bodies? How can making dead souls live be greater than restoring life to mortal bodies? When Christ seeks to give life to the spiritually dead, they are able to exercise their wills and reject life. But in the final bodily resurrection, *all* will be fitted with bodies in which to spend eternity whether they desire them or not — the saved unto eternal bliss, the disobedient to eternal condemnation.

The emphasis of verse 21 is on ascribing to Jesus equal power with God to "make alive" (as the source of life). The Israelites ascribed to Jehovah's being the source of life, especially having the power to raise the dead (cf. Deut. 32:39; I Sam. 2:6). Jesus is simply claiming again to be equal with Jehovah God. The emphasis of this verse is not on any particular resurrection of the dead, but upon the astounding claims of Jesus. Not only has Jesus the power to give life, but He also exercises the prerogative of arbitrary choice. He will give life to whomsoever He desires. In the light of the entire New Testament revelation we know that Jesus desires to give spiritual life to all who trust and obey Him. It is not the Lord's will that stands in the way of any man's eternal destiny, but man's own stubborn will (cf. Jn. 5:40).

The Father has also relegated to the Son all the prerogatives of judgment (cf. Jn. 3:17; Mt. 25:31-46). If the Son has authority to establish the church, to legislate its terms of entrance and its sustaining ordinances, He necessarily judges all who refuse His church. All who are not receiving life through His kingdom are necessarily condemned by their refusal (cf. Jn. 3:18).

Verse 23 seems to be the climax to this particular context. First, there is the statement that the Father and Son are equal in Person; second, the claim substantiated by equality of works; now, the result — equality of honor. To honor is to do homage

to, to reverence, to worship. Jesus is God! This was pointedly directed toward the unbelieving Jews, but every professing Christian ought to etch these words upon his heart! Any person professing to follow the One True God must also reckon with this very plain demand. This *must* be the test of every religious profession and practice, whether by individuals or organizations. Any that do not honor Jesus Christ as Lord are dishonoring God, and are condemned by this verse. Those who do not worship Jesus Christ do not worship God at all. Jesus Christ is ALL or nothing! He cannot be followed as a mere human teacher, nor esteemed even as a prophet commissioned by God . . . He must be exalted and worshipped as Creator, Redeemer and Judge.

Quiz

1. How does Jesus claim deity here?
2. Give three interpretations of "greater works" (v. 20).
3. How is making dead souls live greater than restoring life to physical bodies?
4. Name two prerogatives which the Father has given to the Son.
5. Does any person honor God if he does not worship Jesus?
6. Can a Christian conscientiously belong to any organization which refuses to honor Jesus Christ as Lord?
7. Explain your answers to questions 5 and 6.

POWERS INHERENT IN THAT DEITY

Text 5:24-29

24 Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth him that sent me, hath eternal life, and cometh not into judgment, but hath passed out of death into life.

25 Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour cometh, 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, even so gave he to the Son also to have life in himself:

27 and he gave him authority to execute judgment, because he is a son of man.

28 Marvel not at this: for the hour cometh, in which all that are in the tombs shall hear his voice,

29 and shall come forth; they have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of judgment.

Queries

- a. Will the believer be exempt from appearing at the judgment?
- b. How many resurrections are spoken of here?
- c. What is meant by "he is a son of man"?

Paraphrase

I tell you truly, The one who hears and obeys my Word and trusts and obeys the Father who sent me, does even now possess eternal life. Such a one will not incur the penalty or sentence of judgment, but he has already been translated out of the state of eternal separation from God into the glorious state of eternal life with God. Again, I tell you truly, the time is coming and has already arrived when the spiritually dead shall hear and obey the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear and obey shall be made spiritually alive. For even as the Father is the eternal source of Life, so He has also given to the Son to be the eternal source of Life. The Father has given the Son authority to execute judgment because He is partaking of human nature. You should not be amazed at these claims, for the time is coming when all those who are in their graves shall hear His voice and they shall come forth; those that have done good unto the resurrection of eternal life with God, and those that have done worthlessly or uselessly unto a resurrection for sentence and condemnation.

Summary

Jesus claims power to give eternal life to any who believe. He further claims power to resurrect and judge the dead — both believer and non-believer. The believer will live eternally present with God; the unbeliever will be condemned to eternal banishment from God.

Comment

Those who will hear Jesus' teaching and obey His Word (14:15) may have eternal life. Although Jesus does not use the word obey here, obedience is implied in the word *akouo* (hear). If one truly hears Jesus, one will obey His voice (cf. Jn. 10:14, 16, 27). The one who believes in Jesus must also accept His deity

— that He came forth from the eternal Father. He was sent from God in a unique manner. He was, in fact, God incarnate.

There are tremendous implications in this verse (24). The man who trusts in Jesus enough to keep His Word will not come into condemnation. In other words, the Christian is even now in a state of eternal life. He is restricted, to be sure, having to dwell in an earthly tabernacle (cf. II Cor. 5:1-8; Phil. 1:21-24), but he enjoys a present salvation. The believer (from the moment of his acceptance of the gospel) passes out of the state of a living death (Jn. 3:18) into a present condition of eternal life restricted only by flesh, time and space. But when this mortal shall have been changed, he will put on immortality and incorruption (cf. I Cor. 15:42-58). The man who persists in unbelief is, even while physically alive, in a condition of separation (death) from God, and this condition, persisted in beyond physical death, becomes permanently fixed (Lk. 16:26).

This verse excuses no one, not even the sanctified, from the general resurrection and appearance before the judgment seat of Christ. All of God's creatures will be there (cf. II Cor. 5:9-10; Rom. 14:10; Acts 17:30-31; Rev. 20:11-15, etc.) Saved and unsaved alike will be there, but the saved will be clothed in Christ's righteousness and under no sentence of condemnation (Rev. 3:5, 18; Rom. 8:1).

The reader of this section of Scripture must be careful, for Jesus speaks of a spiritual resurrection as well as a bodily resurrection. Many scholars take the spiritual regeneration (Titus 3:5; Jn. 3:1-8, etc.) or the new birth to be the first resurrection, and the future resurrection of the body to be the second resurrection.

How is it possible for a man to be dead while physically alive? What is a spiritual resurrection? Notice that the prodigal son was said to have been dead when separated or alienated from his father, but alive upon his repentance and return to the father's house (Lk. 15:32). The Gentiles were said to have been dead while living in an unregenerate condition (Eph. 2:1; 5:14) but made alive in Christ. Thus, the one who has sinned (and all have sinned, Rom. 3:23) has incurred the sentence of God upon sin, which is death or separation from God Who is the only source of life. The sinner is, in reality, dead — alienated from God, (cf. Isa. 59:2; Ezek. 18:4, 20; Rom. 6:23). But, as Jesus says in verses 24 and 25, the time has come that all who are spiritually dead may hear His voice, obey it and be quickened (made alive)

from the dead. Notice the following comparison:

First Resurrection (Spiritual)

John 5:24

Time has come when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God . . . and live and not come into condemnation.

Revelation 20:5b-6

This is the first resurrection. Blessed is he that hath part in the first resurrection; over these the second death hath no power.

Second Resurrection (General, Bodily)

John 5:28

Time is coming when all who are in tombs will hear His voice and come out — the good unto resurrection of life — evil unto resurrection of condemnation.

Revelation 20:13-15

And the sea gave up the dead that were in it; and death and Hades gave up the dead that were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. And death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death, even the lake of fire. And if any was not found written in the book of life, he was cast into the lake of fire.

Verse 26 is a continuation of the preceding thought. Just as the Father is inherently the source of all life, so also is the Son. The Son has been sent to reveal the way of life eternal. Incidentally, in so doing He demonstrated Himself also, through miracles, to be the source and regulator of all that is alive in the physical creation.

Verse 27 has been the subject of various interpretations. There is no disagreement over the fact that Jesus is spoken of as "a son of man," or that Jesus has the authority to judge. But the commentators cannot agree upon the meaning behind . . . "he is a son of man." The absence of the definite article (the) before "son" perplexes them. The verse does not say "because he is *the* son of man." Below are the three main interpretations: (a) Jesus has been given the authority to judge because He is a son of man — "son of man" being a Messianic title (cf. Dan.

7:13; Mt. 12:8; Mk. 8:31; Lk. 21:27; Rev. 1:13; etc.). This would be synonymous with "the Son of man." (b) Jesus has been given the authority to judge because He appeared in human form, presented the gospel, and necessarily judges all who reject His message. By his appearance among men in man's form, men were caused to stumble and to think His claims absurd. Thus He judges because He is a son of man. "The eternal love condemns no one because he is a sinner; . . . it leaves it to men to judge themselves through rejection of the Saviour who is presented to them." Expositor's Greek Testament. (c) Jesus has been given the authority to judge because He was born man and partook of man's nature, was tempted as man, yet without sin, suffered the limitations and weaknesses of flesh, and is able therefore to judge justly and mercifully. The last interpretation harmonizes more perfectly with other New Testament teachings (cf. Phil. 2:9-11; Heb. 2:13-18; 4:14-16). If our High Priest must be taken from among men, so must our Judge (cf. Heb. 5:1-10).

Jesus speaks next (v. 28) of the universal resurrection of saved and unsaved — the bodily resurrection where departed souls will be reunited with new bodies. He not only has power to supply spiritual life and authority to judge, but He also claims power to raise the actual dead unto new bodies fitted for eternity. The Jews were told to stop marvelling that He claimed to be able to impart spiritual life and to judge, for the day would come when He would raise their dead ancestors by the power of His voice. When that day comes, they will no longer reject His claims — then every knee shall bow and every tongue shall confess that Jesus is Lord to the glory of the Father (cf. Phil. 2:10-11) — but too late for some!

Then (v. 29) will *all* men be given a body prepared for their eternal destination. Then will the saints be pronounced "not guilty" because they have appropriated to themselves the atoning blood of Jesus. Then they will be dwelling in God's eternal tabernacle (cf. Rev. 21:1-4).

It is interesting to note the word evil is the Greek word *phaula* which means worthless; vain, useless, and not necessarily "immoral" or "vile." The saved are those who have, by faith, done righteous and profitable works of truth. The condemned are those who have, by unbelief, done worthless, vain and unprofitable works of darkness. How *careful* one must be to occupy himself with works that are profitable and glorifying unto God! Even "worthless" and "idle" words will be judged (cf. Mt. 12:36).

The Greek word *krisis* (judgment) can mean either the activity or process of judgment, or the condemnation and punishment that follows the process. It is evident from the light of other Scriptures that the word means punishment in both verses 24 and 29, for while the saints will appear before the judgment seat of God, they will not suffer the punishment.

The Bible reveals that the judgment will be:

- a. Universal (Rom. 14:10; II Cor. 5:10, etc.).
- b. Individual (Rom. 14:12; II Cor. 5:10, etc.).
- c. According to the New Testament (Jn. 12:48; Rom. 2:2, 16).
- d. According to man's works (Rom. 2:6; II Cor. 5:10; Rev. 20:12, 13).
- e. As certain as the resurrection of Christ (Acts 17:31).

Quiz

1. How does the believer enjoy a present salvation?
2. How is it possible for a man to be "dead" while physically alive?
3. What are the first and second resurrections?
4. State briefly three interpretations of "because he is a son of man."
5. Which resurrection does Jesus refer to in verse 28-29?
6. What is another definition of "evil" as used here?
7. Name at least 5 characteristics of the future judgment.

JESUS' OWN WITNESS

Text 5:30-32

30 I can of myself do nothing; as I hear, I judge: and my judgment is righteous; because I seek not mine own will, but the will of him that sent me.

31 If I bear witness of myself, my witness is not true.

32 It is another that beareth witness of me; and I know that the witness which he witnesseth of me is true.

Queries

- a. What makes Jesus' judgment righteous?
- b. Why would Jesus' witness of Himself not be true?

Paraphrase

I am not able to act strictly from My Own will, but as I hear directly from the Father, so I decide and act, because I have no desire to please Myself; My only aim is to act according to the will of the Father Who sent Me. So if I testify to Myself and My Own glory, apart from the Father, then My testimony is untrue. There is Another Who is testifying concerning Me, and I know that His testimony is true.

Summary

Jesus and the Father are absolutely One, and thus Jesus' judgment is righteous. He is therefore bound to testify to His own deity, or be untrue.

Comment

Jesus, in verse 30, re-states the fact of His oneness with the Father, as He had previously declared it in verse 19. The reason His judgment is righteous (just, infallible, perfect) is that He sees what the Father does, and the Father shows Him all things. As Wescott points out, Jesus' judgment is absolutely just because He has no regard for His own will in any judgment, but He abides altogether within the will of the Father. Human judges often do not know how to judge justly. They may at times seek their own will or let their emotions rule instead of that which is just and right. Not so with the Son. He is omniscient.

There are a number of interpretations for verse 31: (a) The sentence should be interrogatively punctuated . . . "If I bear witness concerning Myself, My witness is not true?" (b) "If I should testify to My Own deity without other witnesses, My testimony would not be according to Mosaic law, therefore, I adduce the following witnesses . . ." (the Father, John the Baptist, the Scriptures, etc.). (c) "If I bear witness to Myself, My witness is not true in your estimation.

It is more in harmony with the context, however, to assume that Jesus is making another claim to Oneness with the Father — in a negative sense . . . "If I should testify to Myself as doing these works independently of God I would be a liar, for I can of Myself do nothing, etc. . . ." The Jews had given indication that they expected Him to disclaim any equality with God (cf. 5:17-18), but this He could not do and remain true!

John 5:31 and 8:14 have been ridiculed for years by unthinking critics as "contradictions in the Bible." The critics, as usual, take Jesus' words out of context and interpret them, having already decided beforehand what He says. A careful study of the two passages *in their respective contexts* will show that on both occasions He affirmed exactly the same thing from opposite angles.

5:31

My witness is untrue if given independently of God.

8:14

My witness to Myself is true because I and the Father are One in knowledge and will.

In verse 32 Jesus is expressing His confidence in the witness of Another. This other One is even His Father, God. Jesus briefly introduces the Father as His witness here, and later (v. 36-37) elucidates. Jesus will rest His case upon the testimony of the Father, which the Father is continuing to witness through signs and wonders. When the Father bears witness to Jesus' deity, there can be no question — one can only accept the testimony, or reject it and judge oneself.

Quiz:

1. Why is Jesus' judgment absolutely just?
2. How should verse 31 be interpreted?
3. Does John 5:31 contradict John 8:14? Explain.
4. What is the significance of verse 32?

JOHN THE BAPTIST'S WITNESS

Text 5:33-35

33 Ye have sent unto John, and he hath borne witness unto the truth.

34 But the witness which I receive is not from man: howbeit I say these things, that ye may be saved.

35 He was the lamp that burneth and shineth; and ye were willing to rejoice for a season in his light.

Queries

- a. Why does He not receive witness from man?
- b. How did they rejoice in the Baptist's light?

Paraphrase

You yourselves have sent unto John, and he has testified the truth concerning me. Although I am not dependent upon mere man for witness, I am telling you these things in order that you might accept John's witness and be saved. John was the lamp that was burning and shining to guide you to the Way, and you were willing for a time to bask yourselves in his light.

Summary

Since they stumble at His self-witnessing, He refers them to John the Baptist's witness that they might be led to accept Him.

Comment

They had, indeed, sent unto John asking him of his preaching (1-19), and John confessed to the truth (1:20, 26, 29, 35, 36, etc.) that Jesus was the Son of God. John also testified that Jesus and the Father were one (3:31-36).

On the other hand, Jesus did not need any mortal to take the witness stand on His behalf. He could call upon divine witness. Yet, because of the hardness of their hearts and their spiritual blindness, He urged them to consider John's witness. The Baptist's witness was true, and they had shown some interest in his message at first (v. 35b).

Barclay gives an interesting analogous comparison of John the Baptist and a lamp: (a) A lamp bears a borrowed light. It is not the source of light, but is lit. (b) John's message was warm — not coldly intellectual or ritualistic. (c) John had light — light guides — he guided men to repent in preparation for the coming King and His kingdom. (d) A lamp burns itself out. John decreased while Jesus increased — the true witness for God burns himself out in the service of God.

The emphasis upon the attracting nature of the lamp is in this passage also. The Jews flocked to John the Baptist in the beginning of his ministry, just as insects flock to a lamp (cf. Mt. 3:5; 21:26; Mk. 1:5; 6:20; Lk. 3:15). They rejoiced in his message (of the coming Messiah) until that light turned upon them and revealed their worldliness and sin. They were also attracted to John because of his eccentric and spectacular mode of dress, life, and the presentation of his message. The spectacular in John's ministry soon lost its drawing attraction, however,

when he boldly challenged the nation to "bring forth fruits worthy of repentance," and they rejected him (cf. Mk. 6:19; Lk. 7:24-35). There are people like that in every age. As long as a preacher will make himself or the gospel into a spectacle they will "rejoice for a season in his light" (the spectacle), but once the light illumines their unworthiness and pricks their consciences by openly denouncing their sins, they haughtily reject both the preacher and the message (cf. II Tim. 4:1-4).

Quiz

1. Where is the record of the Baptist's witness to Jesus?
2. Why did Jesus call their attention to the witness of John?
3. How is John "the lamp burning and shining"?
4. How did the Jews "rejoice in his light" for only a "season"?

THE FATHER'S WITNESS

Text 5:36-38

36 But the witness which I have is greater than that of John; for the works which the Father hath given me to accomplish, the very works that I do, bear witness of me, that the Father hath sent me.

37 And the Father that sent me, he hath borne witness of me. Ye have neither heard his voice at any time, nor seen his form.

38 And ye have not his word abiding in you: for whom he sent, him ye believe not.

Queries

- a. What works did Jesus accomplish (v. 36)?
- b. Why had they not heard the Father's voice nor seen His form?
- c. How does the Word of God abide in a person (v. 38)?

Paraphrase

But I have continually the witness of One Who is greater than John the Baptist, for the miraculous works which the Father has given unto Me to complete, these very works which I am doing are bearing witness concerning Me that the Father has sent Me. And the Father Who sent Me has Himself testified concerning Me. You have never at any time heard His voice nor perceived what He is like; and because you do not believe and obey

Him Whom the Father has sent, you do not have the Father's life-giving Word dwelling within you.

Summary

The miracles of Jesus and the testimony of the Father are now introduced as the "greater witness". Rejection of Jesus by the Jews gives evidence of their ignorance of God. Furthermore, by rejecting Him they show their hearts to be bereft of God's Word.

Comment

The miracles of Jesus are undeniable evidence for His deity. Nicodemus could not deny them (Jn. 3:2); Jesus' own brothers admitted them as factual (Jn. 7:3); and the Jewish rulers could not deny the miracles of the apostles (Acts 4:16). But they would not accept Jesus as the Son of God. This is a strange dilemma! Jesus said that the very miracles He *was then doing* (present tense — continuing action) were testifying on behalf of His Sonship. He undoubtedly had in mind especially the lame man just healed by the pool of Bethesda.

The Son had previously introduced the Father as a witness (v. 32). Following that, He introduced two very obvious witnesses (John the Baptist and His own miracles) to ease their animosity against His claiming the Father as a witness. The Jews should have accepted these obvious witnesses.

Verse 37 is a connecting verse. By this verse the witness of the Father is inseparably connected with both Jesus' miracles (v. 36) and the Scriptures (vs. 38-39). But what does Jesus mean by "Ye have neither heard His voice at any time, nor seen his form"? It is evident that He does not mean literal failure to hear and see, for some had heard His voice at Jesus' baptism (cf. Mt. 3:17; Mk. 1:11; Lk. 3:22) on the Mount of Transfiguration (cf. Mt. 17:5-6; Mk. 9:7; Lk. 9:35) and in the Temple area (Jn. 12:28). Jesus is referring to spiritual hearing and spiritual perception (cf. I Jn. 4:12).

Their failure to hear and see God has also special connection with their refusal to hear and discern Jesus as God incarnate (v. 38): "In Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily" (Col. 2:9; cf. also Jn. 1:14; II Cor. 4:4; 5:19; Heb. 1:3). Had God's revelation by types, shadows, prophecies and promises (Old Testament) gained possession of their hearts, they would have readily accepted Jesus as Emmanuel (God with us). It is

significant that Jesus makes acceptance of Himself the condition of the indwelling of God's Word. Except a man accept Jesus as the Son of the living God he has no part with God's Word—neither its commands nor its promises (cf. I Jn. 4:15; 5:1, 9:12).

Quiz

1. Give three Scripture references to show that miracles of Jesus cannot be denied as factual.
2. In what two ways has the Father witnessed concerning Jesus?
3. In what sense had the Jews not heard or seen the Father?
4. Why did God's Word not abide in the Jews?

THE WITNESS OF THE SCRIPTURES

Text 5:39-47

39 Ye search the scriptures, because ye think that in them ye have eternal life; and these are they which bear witness of me;
40 and ye will not come to me, that ye may have life.

41 I receive not glory from men.

42 But I know you, that ye have not the love of God in yourselves.

43 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.

44 How can ye believe, who receive glory one of another, and the glory that cometh from the only God ye seek not?

45 Think not that I will accuse you to the Father: there is one that accuseth you, even Moses, on whom ye have set your hope.

46 For if ye believed Moses, ye would believe me; for he wrote of me.

47 But if ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe my words?

Queries

- a. Why did the Jews search the Scriptures?
- b. Why would Jesus not accuse them?
- c. Where did Moses write concerning Jesus?

Paraphrase

You are searching the Scriptures because you think you have eternal life through searching them; and these very Scriptures which you search so diligently are testifying of Me. But still, you are not willing to come unto Me so that you might have eternal

life. The glory of men is not My motive in making these claims to deity, but I know you do not receive Me because you do not have the love of God in your hearts. I have come with the authority and nature of My Father, and you do not receive me, but if another come in his own authority and seeking the glory of men, you will accept him. How is it possible for you to believe, seeing that you are always seeking approval from one another, and not the approval of the only true God? Do not think that I will accuse you before the Father, for Moses, the very person upon whom you have built your hopes, he is the one accusing you. If you really believed Moses you would believe in Me, for he wrote concerning Me. But if you do not believe what Moses wrote concerning Me in the Scriptures, how can you believe what I say?

Summary

The incomparable and irrefutable witness of the Scriptures is called to testify to the deity of Jesus. This same testimony also produces judgment upon the unbelieving Jew.

Comment

The Greek verb *eraunte* (search) of verse 39 may be interpreted two ways. It may be either in the indicative mood (mood of stating a fact) or in the imperative mood (mood of command). The verb has been translated both "Ye are searching the scriptures . . ." and "Search the scriptures . . ." The context, however calls for the indicative mood rather than the imperative for the following reasons: (a) They were searching the Scriptures for a reason, e.g., "because ye think, etc. . . ." which would preclude the necessity for a command for them to search the scriptures. (b) Jesus is basing His whole argument as to their unbelief on their perverted use of the Scriptures. (c) The practice of the Jews at that time was to study each word minutely, and to build absurd mystical and allegorical interpretations around these word studies.

With all their diligent searching, their tedious allegorical interpretations, and their rote memorization of the Law, the Jews rejected the Messiah when He came to them. There are at least two reasons for this: (a) Their minds were made up as to what the Messiah must be before they read the Scriptures. Then they read the prophecies and perverted them to conform to their prejudiced ideals. (b) They were Bibliolatrists (Bible

worshippers): they worshipped the words of the Bible. The Bible should NOT be worshipped. Jesus Christ is the Way, the Truth and the Life—the Bible is merely the INSPIRED RECORD of God's revelation. The true function of the Scripture is expressed by Jesus Himself, "These are they which testify concerning me." Only when we have the Scriptures in our minds and written on our hearts (cf. Heb. 8:10)—only when they bring us into a personal relationship of trust and obedience to the Person of Christ do we have life from them. Entrance into the promises of God's Word comes by the free gift of God, but only to those who have become sons of God through the adoption covenant recorded in the New Testament, i.e., the plan of salvation.

Verse 40 very definitely shows salvation to be more than a passive acceptance of a "sovereign, irresistible grace" of God. Jesus affirms the free will of man. Man is partially responsible for his own eternal destiny (cf. Jn. 7:17; 8:44).

Jesus rebuked the Jews for their superstitious and fruitless searching of the Scriptures in verses 39-40. The Jews then probably reasoned: "He is angry because we did not give Him our praise and approval for healing on the Sabbath." Jesus anticipates their reasoning and answers, "I receive not the glory of men." What the Lord is saying is this, "I am not making these claims to deity and doing these works for ambition's sake (to win the applause of men). I am claiming deity and showing you your error because I want to save you" (cf. Jn. 5:34). The statement of verse 41 does not mean that we should refuse to praise the name of Christ. Christ's *motive* in doing His works and making His claims was not selfish glory-seeking, but deep self-sacrificing love. This very sacrificial motive, however, earned for Him exaltation from God and praise from men (cf. Phil. 2:5-11).

What was the real reason for their failure to acknowledge Him as the Messiah? It was not that He was a praise-seeker. The real reason was their lack of the love of God in their hearts (cf. I Jn. 2:5; 4:7-9; Rom. 5:5-8). They had no real spiritual knowledge of God or love for God's will and purpose; thus it was impossible for them to recognize the presence of God in Christ.

Verse 43 shows the correctness of the statement of verse 42 (complete lack of fellowship of the Jews with God's will). Jesus

came in the effulgence of God's glory and was the very image of His substance, but they rejected Him. If a mortal comes in his own authority, patterning his programs after their desires, they will receive him. Jesus may have had in mind all the false Christs and insurrectionists who came before Him, and would come after Him (cf. Acts 5:36-37). The worldling offers men a comparatively easy and glorious path to fame or satisfaction. Jesus offers only the strait (confined) and humiliating road to satisfaction.

"The root of their unbelief was their earthly idea of glory, what they could win or bestow. This incapacitated them from seeing the glory of Christ, which was divine and heavenly, which men could not give or remove" (The Expositor's Greek Testament). According to verse 44 the Jews made the praise and glory of men their goal and standard. So long as they sought only the praise of men and measured themselves by human comparisons it was impossible for them to believe (cf. II Cor. 10:12) . . . they were, by such action, "without understanding". In order to trust in the mercy of God and believe His promises one must *need* to believe in God. One can only *need* to believe in God when one has compared himself with God and has seen his lost estate. The next step one must take is to desire the approval, or praise, of God and His salvation. The Jews were not interested in God's approval (cf. Mt. 6:1ff; Mt. 23:5; Jn. 12:43).

Jesus says in verse 45; "Do not complacently suppose that in rejecting Me you have done away with the possibility of being accused before God! The very Moses in whom you base your hopes will accuse you through his writings, for he prophesied of My deity which you have rejected". The Greek word *kategoroso* has been translated accuse here. It is a composite of *kata* (against) and *agoreuo* (speak in the public assembly), hence, bring a public accusation against. We have the English word categorize from this word.

Jesus would not need to condemn or accuse them for their rejection of Him, since the prophesied Messiah of the Pentateuch would cause their esteemed Moses to condemn them. In spite of their claiming to be the disciples of Moses (Jn. 9:28), they did not believe his writings.

Verse 46 is another of the numerous places where Jesus bears witness to the fact that Moses was the author of some portion of the Scriptures, and further that Moses prophesied concerning the

Christ. In other instances, Jesus establishes Moses as the author of the Pentateuch (cf. Lk. 24:44).

If they had believed Moses they would have believed Him (v. 46). The converse is now given — if they believe not the words Moses has written how shall they believe the words of Jesus? If they could not believe Moses' words, and seek the approval of God — how could they believe the words of Christ which came to them without the recommendation of use and age?

That which had been the greatest advantage and privilege of the Jew (cf. Rom. 3:1-4) became their accuser and condemner (cf. Rom. 2:1-29). Knowledge carries with it responsibility. The greater one's privilege or position is, the greater is the responsibility and condemnation for failure (Jas. 3:1).

Quiz

1. Is Jesus commanding them to search the Scriptures, or merely stating the fact that they do so, in verse 39?
2. Give two reasons why the Jews could not come to Jesus even though they searched the Scriptures diligently.
3. How does verse 40 refute the doctrine of "irresistible grace"?
4. In what way does Christ *not* seek the praise of men?
5. Why do they receive one who comes in his own name, but not Jesus Who came in the name of the Father?
6. How does Moses accuse the Jews?
7. Give two Scripture references which show "the greater the position, the greater the responsibility".

SPECIAL STUDY NO. 3

Christianity stands or falls with the deity of Jesus. The Fourth Gospel is vigorously attacked by hostile critics because it so plainly declares the deity of Jesus of Nazareth. The unbeliever assumes that once he has destroyed the historicity of John's Gospel, he has destroyed the deity of Jesus, since the remainder of the New Testament (according to the unbelieving critic) makes no such claims as the Gospel of John.

We introduce here a term paper written by Miss LaDonna Woods, student at Ozark Bible College. Her paper is a very comprehensive and well-organized compilation of facts gathered from many sources. The author gratefully acknowledges Miss Wood's permission to reproduce the study. The reader will notice that Christ's deity is asserted and substantiated throughout the entire New Testament.

THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

THE DEITY OF JESUS

by LaDonna Woods

I. CLAIMS OF JESUS

I. "The Son of Man"

This was Jesus' favorite name for Himself. It occurs about seventy times in the Gospels: Matthew, 30 times; Mark, 5 times; Luke, 25 times; John, 10 times.

It was used in Daniel 7:13, 14, 27 as name for the coming Messiah. Jesus' adoption of it is thought to have been equivalent to a claim of Messiahship.

He also carried this title with Him to heaven (Acts 7:56).

II. "The Son of God"

Jesus called Himself the Son of God in John 5:25. John tells us in John 5:18 that the Jews sought to kill Him because he not only broke the Sabbath, but also called God His own Father, making himself equal with God. Three times Jesus categorically said, "I am the Son of God": Mark 14:61-62; John 9:35-37; 10:36.

III. Expressions of Himself that can be predicated only of deity:

- A. "I am the Way the Truth and the Life" (John 14:6).
- B. "I am the door; by Me if any man enter in he shall be saved and shall go in and out, and shall find pasture" (John 10:9).
- C. "No man can come unto the Father but by Me" (John 14:6).
- D. "I am the Bread of Life" (John 6:35, 38).
- E. "I am the Life" (John 11:25; 14:6).
- F. "I am the Resurrection" (John 11:25).
- G. "He that believes on Me shall never Die" (John 11:26).
- H. "I am the Messiah" (John 4:25-26).
- I. "Before Abraham was I am" (John 8:58).
- J. "Father, glorify Me with the glory I had with Thee before the world was" (John 17:5). (a clear declaration of His pre-incarnate existence).
- K. "He that has seen Me has seen the Father" (John 14:9).
- L. "I and the Father are one" (John 10:30).
- M. "All power on earth and in heaven has been given unto me" (Mt. 28:18).
- N. "I am with you always, even unto the end of the world" (Mt. 28:20).

THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

- O. "I am the Light of the world" (Jn. 8:12).
- P. "I am the good Shepherd" (Jn. 10:11).
- Q. "You are of this world; I am not of this world. You are from beneath; I am from above" (Jn. 8:23).
- R. "Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day, and he saw it and was glad" (Jn. 8:56).
- S. "Moses wrote of Me" (Jn. 5:46).
- T. "The Father, He has borne witness of Me" (Jn. 5:37).
- U. "Except you believe that I am He, you shall die in your sins" (Jn. 8:24).
- V. "Blessed are your eyes, for I say unto you many kings and prophets desired to see the things that you see, but did not see them, and to hear the things which you hear, but did not hear them" (Lk. 10:23-24).
- W. "The queen of Sheba came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon. A greater than Solomon is here. The Ninevites repented at the preaching of Jonah. Here is a greater than Jonah" (Mt. 12:41-42).

Who else could have said such things about himself? Only God incarnate! Of whom else could we say them? None except the Son of the living God. Let us now consider what the apostles had to say concerning the deity of Jesus.

II. THE APOSTLES' CLAIMS CONCERNING CHRIST

I. Peter

When at Caesarea Philippi Jesus asked His disciples who men said that He was, Peter answered and said unto Him, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God" (Mt. 16:13-20). This is told also in Mark 8:27-29 and Luke 9:18-20.

It had been some three years since Peter had first accepted Jesus as the Messiah (Jn. 1:41-42). A year later he called Him Lord (Lk. 5:8). Half a year later he called Him the holy One of God (Jn. 6:68-69). Now, after two and one-half years of association with Jesus he expresses his conviction in the deity of Jesus.

The Rock (Mt. 16:18) on which Christ would build His church is not Peter, but the truth which Peter confessed, that Jesus is the Son of God. The deity of Jesus is the foundation upon which the church rests, the fundamental creed of Christendom.

II. John

A. Jesus was in the beginning.

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In John 1:1-3 we are reminded of the opening words of Genesis. Jesus is called God and Creator. John is very positive that Jesus was a personality existing from eternity, and that He had a hand in the creation of the universe. In John 17:5 Jesus is quoted as referring to the "glory He had with the Father before the world was."

Jesus is also called the Word in John 1:1; that is, Jesus was God's expression of Himself to mankind. Jesus was God. Jesus was like God. Jesus was God's message to mankind:

B. Jesus is the Light of the world.

John tells us this in John 1:4-13; 8:12; 9:5 and 12:46. This is one of the keynotes in John's thought about Jesus (cf. I John 1:5-7). It means that Jesus, as Light of the world, is the One who makes clear the meaning and destiny of human existence.

C. The Incarnation (John 1:14-18).

God became a man in order to win man to Himself. God could have made man with an instinct to do His will; but He chose rather to give man the power to decide for himself his attitude toward his Creator. But God is a spirit; and man is hedged in by the limitations of a material body, and has scant conception of what a Spirit is. So the Creator came to His creatures in the form of one of them to give them an idea of the kind of being He is. God is like Jesus. Jesus is like God.

III. Jesus is called the Son of God by:

A. Mark (1:1)

B. John (3:16, 18; 20:31)

C. John the Baptist (Jn. 1:34)

D. Nathanael (Jn. 1:49)

E. Peter (Mt. 16:16)

F. Martha (Jn. 11:27)

G. The Disciples (Mt. 14:33)

H. Gabriel (Lk. 1:32-35)

These are the claims of some of Jesus' apostles and disciples concerning His deity. Let us take a general look at the Scriptures.

NAMES AND TITLES APPLIED BY THE SCRIPTURES TO CHRIST

The Christ, the Messiah, Saviour, Redeemer, Wonderful Counsellor, Faithful Witness, the Word of God, the Truth, the Light of the World, the Way, the Good Shepherd, Mediator, Deliverer, the Great High Priest, the Author and Perfector of

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our Faith, the Captain of our Salvation, Our Advocate, the Son of God, the Son of Man, God, the Holy One of God, only begotten Son, Mighty God, the image of God, everlasting Father, Lord, Lord of All, Lord of Glory, Lord of Lords, blessed and only Potentate, King of Israel, King of Kings, Ruler of the kings of the Earth, Prince of Life, Prince of Peace, the Son of David, the Branch, David, Root and Offspring of David, the Bright and Morning Star, Immanuel, the second Adam, the Lamb of God, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End, the beginning of the creation of God, the First born of all creation, the Amen.

Only Jesus could be rightfully named all these names. It is not enough, however, for one just to be called these names, for they merely claim deity. We must have proof if we are to trust in Jesus as divine. This proof is found in the fulfillment by Jesus of the Old Testament prophecies, in the amazing character of Jesus, in the miracles which Jesus performed, in His resurrection and in His ascension.

III. PROPHECIES OF THE OLD TESTAMENT, AND THEIR FULFILLMENT IN JESUS CHRIST

The complete story of Jesus' life: its main features, events, and accompanying incidents, even in minutest detail, is plainly foretold in the Old Testament Scriptures.

I Birth

A. Prophecy that a Messiah was to come:

1. Jesus accepted the Old Testament prophecies which declared the absolute deity of the coming Messiah, as referring to Himself. "Therefore the Lord Himself shall give you a sign; Behold a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel" (Isa. 7:14). This is a clear statement of the birth of Christ. It also plainly says that the Son born of this virgin should be called Immanuel, literally, God with us.
2. "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace" (Isa. 9:6). The names of this child are the names of deity! The child to be born, the Son to be

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- given, was to be very God, as clearly deity as God the Father Himself, and in fact, a very manifestation of the Father.
- B. Genesis 3:15 — The Seed of Woman
 - 1. The Deliverer from sin must be:
 - a. Of the seed of woman
 - b. Temporarily hindered
 - c. Finally victorious
 - 2. Paul writes, "but when the fulness of time came, God sent forth his Son, born of woman" (Gal. 4:4, 5).
 - C. The Deity of Christ is substantiated by the virgin birth.
 - 1. It was prophesied that the Christ would be born of a virgin. (Isa. 7:14).
 - 2. Matthew 1:20, 21 is the fulfillment of this prophecy.
 - D. It was prophesied that He would be born in Bethlehem. Micah 5:2 — fulfilled Matthew 2:6; Luke 2:4-7 (cf. John 7:42).
 - E. It was prophesied that He was to be of David's family.
 - 1. Old Testament
 - a. II Sam. 7:12-16; Psa. 89:3-4; 110:1; Gen. 49:8-10
 - 2. New Testament
 - a. Matt. 1:1, Rev. 22:16; Rom. 1:3
- ## II His Life
- A. Prophesied that He would sojourn in Egypt
 - 1. Hosea 11:1 — fulfilled Matt. 2:13-15
 - B. Prophesied that Jesus would live at Nazareth
 - 1. Isa. 11:1; Jer. 23:5; Zech. 3:8 — fulfilled Matt. 2:23; Lk. 4:16
 - C. Jesus' Ministry
 - 1. Prophesied that He would proclaim a jubilee to the world. Isa. 61:1 — fulfilled Lk. 4:16-21
 - 2. Prophesied His ministry to be one of healing. Isa. 53:4 — fulfilled Matt. 8:14-17
 - 3. Prophesied He would teach by parables. Isa. 6:9-10; Psa. 78:2 — fulfilled Matt. 13:14-35
 - 4. Prophesied He would be rejected by the rulers.
 - a. Psa. 69:4; 118:22 — fulfilled Matt. 21:42; Mk. 12:10, 11; Lk. 20:17; Acts 4:11-12; I Pet. 2:4
 - b. Isa. 53:1 — fulfilled Jn. 12:37-41; 15:25 (cf. Psa. 35:19; 119:4).

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III His Death in Prophecy

- A. Prophesied that He would be betrayed by a friend for thirty pieces of silver.
 - 1. Zech. 11:12-13; Psa. 41:9 — fulfilled Matt. 27:9-10; John 13:18.
- B. Prophesied that He would be given vinegar and gall.
 - 1. Psa. 69:21 — fulfilled Matt. 27:34; John 19:29
- C. Prophesied that they would cast lots for His garments.
 - 1. Psa. 22:18 — fulfilled John 19:24
- D. Even His dying words were foretold.
 - 1. Psa. 22; Psa. 33:5 — fulfilled Matt. 27:46
- E. Prophesied that not a bone of His body would be broken.
 - 1. Ex. 12:46; Num. 9:12; Psa. 34:20 — fulfilled Jn. 19:36
- F. Prophesied that His side would be pierced.
 - 1. Zech. 12:10; Psa. 22:16 — fulfilled Jn. 19:37

IV His Burial in Prophecy

- A. It was prophesied that He would be buried by a rich man. Isa. 53:9; Matt. 27:57-60 (The fact is stated in Matthew, but the prophecy is not quoted).

V His Resurrection in Prophecy

- A. Prophesied that He would rise from the dead the third day: Matt. 12:40, Lk. 24:46. No particular passage is quoted from the Old Testament for this, but Jesus likens His burial and resurrection to Jonah's entombment in the belly of the whale.
- B. That He would rise from the dead as prophesied in Peter's application of Psalm 16:8ff in his sermon in Acts 2:25-32 (cf. also Acts 13:33-35 and Psa. 2).
- C. Jesus said, "it is *written*, that the Christ should suffer, and rise again from the dead the third day" (Lk. 24:46).

Christ is the theme of the Bible (Jn. 5:39; Heb. 10:7). He is the Word of God (Jn. 1:1-18; Rev. 19:13), and the Bible is the Word of God (Heb. 4:13). He is the Word incarnate, and the Bible is the Word written.

He is the theme of the whole Bible. Not only in the New Testament but in the Old Testament as well, He is the central figure. Throughout the Book "the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy" (Rev. 19:10). In I Peter 1:10-11 it is declared that the sufferings of Christ and the glory that shall follow constitute the theme of the Old Testament writers.

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We have already seen some of the prophecies concerning Christ in the Psalms that were completely fulfilled. There are many more references to the prophetic nature of the Psalms yet in the New Testament.

When Christ was talking to His apostles after His resurrection, He definitely mentioned the Psalms (Lk. 24:44). There are many references to the Second Psalm in the New Testament, and their application to our Lord is clear:

1. Psalms 2:1-13 is applied to Christ in Acts 4:23-26; 27-28.

2. Psalms 2:7: "I will tell of the decree Jehovah said unto me, Thou art my son." In Acts 13:35 the same words are applied to Christ: "Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee." That the Lord Jesus is the One spoken of here is shown by the New Testament references to this verse. In Hebrews 1:4, 5, His superiority to the angels is deduced from the fact that to none of the angels did God ever say, "Thou art my Son"; and in Hebrews 5:5, it is declared specifically that the words of this seventh verse of the Second Psalm refers to Christ. "This day have I begotten thee" — The day referred to here is the day of His resurrection, as is seen by Paul's words in Acts 13:32, 33 declaring the "glad tidings, how that the promise which was made unto the fathers, God hath fulfilled the same unto us their children, in that he hath raised up Jesus again; as it is also written in the second psalm, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee." On that day He became the first begotten from the dead. Others had been raised from the dead, but in their case it was only resuscitation of the natural body; He was the first to come forth with an immortal and glorified body.

3. Psalms 22, 23 and 24 are all Shepherd Psalms: In the New Testament our Lord is presented as a Shepherd in three ways: (1) In John 10 He is the Good Shepherd giving His life for the sheep (Jn. 10:11); (2) In Hebrews 13:20 He is the Great Shepherd, "brought again from the dead . . . through the blood of the everlasting covenant," Who is now in resurrection power and glory caring for His flock; (3) In I Peter 5:4 He is the Chief Shepherd who will one day appear to reward His under-shepherds and take immediate charge of His sheep. All these relationships are set forth in the three Shepherd Psalms: (1) In Psalm 22 the Good Shepherd lays down His life for His sheep; (2) In Psalm 23 the Great Shepherd is leading His sheep and caring for them; (3) In Psalm 24 He is the King of glory, in His appearing at the end of the age.

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We have seen how the prophecies of the Old Testament fulfilled in Christ show that He truly is the promised One, the Messiah. Let us now look at the character of Jesus while He was here among men. Even though He came as a man we can see from a study of His earthly life that He was divine, the One sent forth from God.

IV. CHRIST'S UNPARALLELED CHARACTER

(John 18:19-40)

- I Challenge of a Perfect Life
 - A. He prayed for forgiveness of His murderers Lk. 23:34
 - B. He laid down His life for the unrighteous. Rom. 5:8
- II His enemies find no fault in Him
 - A. Pilate said, "Behold, the man, I find no fault in him." Jn. 19:4, 5, 6.
 - B. Bovee said, "Even if we should reject all other miracles of the Christ, yet we have the miracle of Christ Himself."
- III Characteristics of an Ideal Man
 - A. He was a man of strength, not a weakling (Mt. 4:1-10)
Jesus withstood the temptation of Satan. Even Samson, a physical giant, could not do that.
 - B. Jesus was a man of power, not an incompetent (Jn. 18:1-11)
 - 1. As a man alone against a great mob of people who were sent to take Him, He caused the mob to fall to the ground when he said, "I am He."
 - C. Jesus was a man of courage, not a coward (Lk. 9:51-56)
 - 1. Knowing that a horrible death awaited Him at Jerusalem, he "set his face steadfastly to go to Jerusalem."
 - D. Jesus was a man of compassion (Jn. 11:30-36).
 - 1. Men sometimes look upon tears from the eyes of men as a sign of weakness, but they most certainly are not. Severity, harshness, coldness, are not signs of real manhood. Tears reveal a heart. A powerful man without a heart is more liable to be a menace than a blessing. The coward may be brazen, but a courageous man may yet be tender to the point of tears. Jesus' tears for the suffering but enhance Him as the Man of men.

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E. Jesus was a man of forgiveness (Lk. 23:23-38)

1. Could we only experience Christ's humiliation when He was mocked, jostled, lied about, spat upon, thorn-crowned; and then nailed to the cross to die in the most excruciating agony, actually praying in the midst of His agony for the forgiveness of those who were cursing, mocking and taunting Him, we should have some idea of the degree of forgiving grace which He possessed. There is none to equal it! (cf. I Pet. 2:21-25)

From these instances alone we have the picture of One who perfectly fulfills every characteristic of the ideal man. He is the one and only such fulfillment the world has ever known!

Such a man as this would be able to do great wonders. Jesus did do many miracles while He was here on this earth in the form of man. Let us look at some of these miracles.

V. MIRACLES OF JESUS

Jesus said, "The works which the Father has given me to do, the very works that I do, bear witness of me" (Jn. 5:36).

Aside from supernatural manifestations such as angelic announcements, virgin birth, the star that guided the Magi, Jesus passing through hostile mobs, cleansing the temple, His transfiguration, soldiers falling, darkness at the crucifixion, the tombs opened, the earthquake, Jesus' resurrection, angel appearances, there are recorded thirty-five miracles which Jesus wrought. Below are a few of the more outstanding ones:

A. Bodily Cures

1. Healing the nobleman's son at a distance (Jn. 4:41-59)
2. Healing a leper (Mt. 8:2-4; Mk. 1:40-45; Lk. 5:12-15)
3. Healing the lame man at the pool (Jn. 5:2-9)
4. Many others!

B. Miracles over the forces of nature

1. Turning the water into wine (Jn. 2:1-11)
2. The draught of fishes near Capernaum (Lk. 5:1-11)
3. Stilling the tempest (Mt. 8:23-27; Mk. 4:35-41; Lk. 8:22-25)
4. Feeding the five thousand (Mt. 14:13-21; Mk. 6:34-44; Lk. 9:11-17; Jn. 6:1-14)
5. Walking on the water (Mt. 14:22-33; Mk. 6:45-52, Jn. 6:19)

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6. Jesus feeds the four thousand (Mt. 15:32-39; Mk. 8:1-9)
- C. Cures of Demoniacs
 1. One healed in a synagogue (Mk. 1:21-28)
 2. Blind and dumb one healed (Mt. 12:22; Lk. 11:14)
 3. Syro-Phoenician woman's daughter healed (Mt. 15:21-28; Mk. 7:24-30)
- D. Three raised from the dead
 1. Jairus' daughter (Mt. 9:18-26; Mk. 5:22-43; Lk. 8:41-56)
 2. Widow's son at Nain (Lk. 7:11-15)
 3. Lazarus (Jn. 11:1-44)
- E. Other Miracles
 1. John 2:23
 2. Matthew 4:24
 3. Matthew 15:30-31
 4. John 21:25
- F. Purpose of the Miracles

Jesus' miracles imply an exercise of creative power — a life-giving source. They were a part of God's way of authenticating Jesus' mission. Jesus said that if He had not done the works that no other ever did, they would not have had sin (Jn. 15:24) thus indicating that He regarded His miracles as proof that He was from God. Then, too, His miracles were the natural expression of His sympathy for suffering humanity (Mk. 2:10; Jn. 5:36; 14:11-12).

We could not leave this study of the deity of Jesus without discussing how His resurrection and ascension definitely show forth His deity.

V. THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS

It is absolutely certain that the apostles of Christ, and the first teachers of Christianity asserted the fact of Jesus' resurrection (every recorded sermon in the book of Acts mentions His resurrection as its basis, plus all the mention of it in the Epistles).

Should the question arise whether the things told of Christ be the very things which the apostles and first preachers delivered concerning Him, we must rely upon the evidence we possess of the genuineness of the Scriptures. On the subject of the resurrection we need no such discussion, for such a doubt cannot be entertained. The only points we could discuss on this subject is whether the apostles knowingly published a falsehood or whether they were themselves deceived; whether either of these suppositions be possible. It is very unlikely that the first supposition is

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true. The nature of the undertaking, and of the men; the extreme unlikelihood that such men should engage in such a measure as a scheme; their personal toils and dangers and sufferings in the cause; their appropriation of their whole time to the object; their zeal and earnestness, their sincerity, relieves any suspicion of imposture.

Some would like to resolve the conduct of the apostles into misguided enthusiasm; which would class the evidence of Christ's resurrection with the numerous stories of the apparitions of dead men. There are many circumstances found in the Bible which destroy this hypothesis completely.

It was not one person who saw Jesus after His resurrection, but many; they saw Him not only separately, but together, not only by night, but by day, not at a distance but near, not once but several times; they not only saw Him, but touched Him, conversed with Him, ate with Him and examined His person to satisfy their doubts.

These facts are recorded in the Bible. Here are the appearances Jesus made after His resurrection:

1. To Mary Magdalene (Mk. 16:9-10)
2. To the other women (Mt. 28:9-10)
3. To two disciples on the way to Emmaus (Mk. 16:12-13; Lk. 24:13-32)
4. To Peter (Lk. 24:34)
5. To the eleven (Mk. 16:14; Lk. 24:36; Jn. 20:19)
6. To the eleven (Jn. 20:26-31 — Thomas present)
7. To the seven (Jn. 21)
8. To the eleven (and 500 at once?) (Mt. 28:16-20)
9. To James (I Cor. 15:7)
10. Ascension (Mk. 16:19; Lk. 24:44; Acts 1:6-11)

In I Corinthians 15:5-8 and Acts 9:1-9 we learn that Jesus also appeared, twenty-seven years after the Resurrection, to the arch-enemy of the church, Saul of Tarsus!

The statement in Acts 1:3, "showed himself alive by many proofs by the space of forty days, speaking things concerning the kingdom of God," along with similar statements in Acts 10:41 and 13:31, implies the possibility that He may have made many appearances besides those recorded and that His post-resurrection ministry may have been more extensive than we know.

With all these accounts, the writings of five different men, plus the conversion of the most determined and feared persecutor of Christianity, how could anyone doubt that Jesus did rise from

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the dead and did show Himself alive to eyewitnesses? We know such testimony would stand up in any court of any nation as evidence to establish the fact beyond a reasonable doubt! If any person persists in rejecting the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, he rejects the historic evidence and testimony which, *above all other history*, meets the test of sound canons of credibility. Such a person could not believe any history!

VII. THE ASCENSION OF JESUS

The final miraculous event in Jesus' life as a man here on earth occurred forty days after His resurrection. After His resurrection, Jesus appeared unto His apostles, teaching them things concerning the kingdom of God. He gave to them the Great Commission to go into all parts of the world and preach the gospel, and also the promise of the Holy Spirit. On the final day, as they were all assembled together on the Mount of Olives, Jesus "was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight" (Acts 1:9). As the apostles stood watching, two men in white apparel appeared and told the apostles that Jesus would one day come again in like manner as they beheld Him going (Acts 1:1-11).

We do know that Jesus returned to His heavenly glory. Stephen tells us, as he is being stoned for preaching the deity of Jesus, "Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God" (Acts 7:56).

VIII. CONCLUSION

We have set forth the names and titles which ascribe deity unto Jesus of Nazareth. It is not enough, however, to accept these claims unsubstantiated.

We then proceed to prove the deity of Jesus of Nazareth by: (1) fulfillment of Old Testament prophecies in His Person; (2) the undeniable perfect character of Jesus; (3) the miracles He actually performed; (4) His own bodily resurrection foretold by Himself as proof for His claims to be the Son of God; (5) His ascension to the right hand of God.

The resurrection and the ascension of Jesus would have been stupendous events to behold. Yet we will one day witness just as great an event — the day when Jesus comes again. Those who have believed and trusted Jesus — those who have obeyed Him and remained faithful shall be caught up with Him to be with Him forever. We must remain strong in our faith, never doubting.

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We must believe that the Bible is the inspired Word of God. If we believe this, then we will believe in the deity of Jesus, for we know that this is the central theme of the entire Bible.

SPECIAL STUDY NO. 4

The earthly ministry of the Lord of Glory was fraught with controversy and objection. It is surprising to some to discover this fact. It is even more surprising to recognize that Jesus actually performed some of His miracles (such as the one in John 5) to touch off controversy.

Again, we are indebted to Seth Wilson, Dean of Ozark Bible College. He has compiled all the research and has graciously permitted us to introduce it here as Special Study No. 4.

The ministry of Jesus, judged by modern standards, would appear unsuccessful, ill-prosecuted and certainly not an ideally peaceful ministry.

Notice that controversy began almost immediately at the commencement of His public ministry. The controversy, however, did not intensify and cause determinate conclusions by the Jews until the Second Year of His ministry (John 5).

CONTROVERSIES AND OBJECTIONS IN JESUS' MINISTRY

by Seth Wilson

FIRST PASSOVER Cleansing of temple in Jerusalem (John 2). Jewish officials challenge His authority to do it:

Does Nicodemus' coming at night indicate that Jesus was a controversial figure? (John 3)

Beginning of Galilean Ministry, 8-9 months after first Passover at Nazareth; sermon in Synagogue, pushed to the cliff Luke 4:23-30

At Capernaum; paralytic forgiven; scribes and Pharisees thought it blasphemy (Mt. 9:2-8; Mk. 2:1-12; Lk. 5:18-26). (Note Pharisees following from Jerusalem)

At Matthew's house; feast with publicans and sinners; Pharisees object (Mt. 9:10-13; Mk. 2:15-17; Lk. 5:29-32).

Objection implied in the question of John the Baptist's disciples about fasting (Mt. 9:14-17; Mk. 2:18-22; Lk. 5:33-39).

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SECOND PASSOVER

At pool in Jerusalem; heals lame man on Sabbath; first definite effort of Jews to kill Him (Jn. 5, esp. v. 18).

In grain fields; 2nd Sabbath controversy - - - over plucking grain (Mt. 12:1-8; Mk. 2:23-38; Lk. 6:1-5).

In Synagogue; 3rd Sabbath controversy; heals man with the withered hand (Mt. 12:9-14; Mk. 3:1-6; Lk. 6:6-11).

In house of Simon the Pharisee; Simon's mental objections to Jesus' letting sinful woman touch Him (Lk. 7:36-50).

At Capernaum; very busy with great crowds; dumb demoniac healed; Pharisees claim He is possessed by Beelzebub (Mt. 12:22-37; Mk. 3:22-30); His family attempts to interfere, seeming to object to the strenuousness of His ministry (Mt. 12:46-50).

East side of Galilean sea, land of Gadarenes; casts out demons; people ask Him to leave (Mt. 8:43; Mk. 5:17; Lk. 8:37).

At Nazareth, last visit recorded; general unbelief and rejection (Mt. 13:54-58; Mk. 6:1-6).

THIRD PASSOVER NEAR

Fed 5000; sermon on Bread of Life at Capernaum; "This is a hard saying, who can receive it?" They forsook Him (John 6).

General Condition:

John 7:1 — the Jews seek to kill Him.

Capernaum: Jerusalem Pharisees publicly criticize Jesus for His disciple's eating with unwashed hands (Mt. 15:1-20; Mk. 7:1-23).

At Magadan; Pharisees and Sadducees demand a sign from heaven (Mt. 15:39; 16:1-4; Mk. 8:10-12).

At Caesarea Philippi; Peter objects to the first plain prediction of Jesus' death (Mt. 16:21-26; Mk. 8:31-38; Lk. 9:22-26).

At Capernaum; Jesus' unbelieving brothers object to His staying in seclusion, and urge Him to go to the Feast of Tabernacles (Jn. 7:3-9).

FEAST OF TABERNACLES (Six months before His death)

Jerusalem during the Feast; the rulers seek to kill Him (Jn. 7:14-24). They seek to arrest Him (Jn. 7:30).

Disputing over their freedom and fatherhood (Jn. 8:31-47). They accuse Jesus of being a Samaritan and

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having a demon, and object to the promise that believers will never see death, they take up stones to stone Him (Jn. 8:48-59).

Jerusalem; man born blind healed on the Sabbath. The healed man is excommunicated . . . brief exchange between Jesus and Pharisees on blindness and guilt (Jn. 9:1-41). Dispute among the Jews about the sermon on the Good Shepherd (Jn. 10:19-21).

Judea; dumb demoniac healed and Jesus again accused of demon possession Lk. 11:14-26.

Dining in house of Pharisee; Jesus does not wash His hands, Pharisees astonished . . . they press Him hard to catch something for which to accuse Him (Lk. 11:37-54).

In a Synagogue on Sabbath; healing a bent woman; ruler of synagogue indignant (Lk. 13:11-17).

FEAST OF DEDICATION

Jerusalem; Jesus tells Jews "I and the Father are one." They take up stones to stone Him. They accuse Him of blasphemy and try again to arrest Him (Jn. 10:34-39).

DEPARTURE TO PEREA (Three months before His death)

In Perea; Herod seeks to kill Jesus (Lk. 13:31-35).

In home of Pharisee on Sabbath; man with dropsy healed. Jesus accused of unlawful action (Lk. 14:1-6).

Publicans and sinners come to Jesus; Pharisees murmur (Lk. 14).

Teaching in Perea; Pharisees scoff at Him (Lk. 16).

After raising Lazarus from dead; priests and Pharisees seek to put Jesus and Lazarus both to death (Jn. 11:43-54).

Last Journey to Jerusalem; Pharisees test Him with question about divorce (Mt. 19:1-9; Mk. 10:1-12).

At Jericho; Zacchaeus receives Jesus, the people sneer (Lk. 19:1-10).

Few days before Passover; chief priests demand anyone knowing where Jesus is must inform so they may arrest Him (Jn. 11:55-57).

Feast in Bethany; Judas objects to Mary's anointing Jesus as being wasteful (Mt. 26:6-13; Mk. 14:3-9; Jn. 12:1-8).

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TRIUMPHAL ENTRY

Crowds praising Him; Pharisees say, "Teacher rebuke thy disciples" (Lk. 19:37-40).

Next day (Monday); cleanses Temple again. (Mt. 21:12-17; Mk. 11:15-19; Lk. 19:45-58).

Healing in the Temple; children praise; priests and scribes object (Mt. 21:14ff).

Next day (Tuesday) in Temple; Jesus' authority challenged by priests (Mt. 21:23-27; Mk. 11:27-33; Lk. 20:1-8). A trap question about tribute to Caesar (Mt. 22:15-22; Mk. 12:13-17; Lk. 20:20-26).

The Sadducees' question about marriage in resurrection. The Lawyer's question about the greatest commandment. Jesus' question about David's son being David's Lord (Mt. 22:23-46; Mk. 12:18-37; Lk. 20:27-44).

Disciples warned against the Pharisees and their hypocrisies (Matthew 23).

Last Tuesday or Wednesday; Reflections about the coming of the Greeks to Jesus; many believe but will not confess for fear of the Jews (Jn. 12:20-50).

Thursday night; Trials before Annas, Caiaphas, Sanhedrin, Pilate, Herod, Pilate. Mockings and charges at the trials and at the Crucifixion.

EXPOSITORY SERMON NO. 5 JESUS, THE SON OF GOD

John 5:1-47

Introduction

I BEGAN WITH CONTROVERSY OVER HEALING ON SABBATH

A. Set the scene

1. Feast, pool, man ill 38 years, is healed
2. Pharisaic rules for Sabbath-keeping
3. Possibility that Jesus deliberately aroused controversy to bring about a demonstration of His deity

B. Importance of John 5

This sin-sick world needs to be encouraged:

1. that Jesus is the Christ, the manifestation of God in the flesh

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2. that with a conviction of this absolute truth we can become new creatures
- II JESUS' SERMON FALLS NATURALLY INTO THREE DIVISIONS:
- A. His equality with God — the prerogatives of deity
 - B. The witnesses to His deity
 - C. The causes of unbelief in His deity

Discussion

- I JESUS' EQUALITY WITH GOD — PREROGATIVES OF DEITY
- A. He and the Father One (5:17-20) in:
 1. Intimate love
 2. Knowledge of wills
 3. Purposes for mankindFather works deeds of providential mercy on Sabbath, so also did Jesus
 - B. Son has authority to raise the dead (v. 24-29)
 1. Spiritually
 2. Physically
 - C. Son given authority to judge (v. 22-23)
 1. Imagine Pharisees taken aback at this statement, they who would soon arrest and judge Him
 2. Many today judge Jesus
 - a. Imposter
 - b. Good man
 - c. BUT ALL SHALL STAND BEFORE HIM TO BE JUDGED
 3. Judgment given Him that all may honor Him as God
 - a. Jesus claims right to be worshipped by men
 - b. Any who deny deity of Jesus dishonor God
- II WITNESSES TO THE DEITY OF JESUS
- A. John the Baptist (v. 33-35)
 1. That he (John) was not the Christ
 2. That he (John) was the forerunner
 3. That Jesus was the Lamb of God
 4. That the bodily presence of the Spirit was manifested as descending upon Jesus
 5. Jews rejoiced over John's great announcements of the coming Messiah, but when he focused truth on their sins, they killed him

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6. Remember when Jews questioned Jesus' authority to cleanse temple?
 - a. He asked them concerning John's baptism
 - b. They recognized John as a prophet, but rejected his message of repentance and baptism because they loved the glory of men.

RELIGIOUS LEADERS TODAY KNOW THAT THE NEW TESTAMENT PLAN OF SALVATION IS GOD'S WAY, BUT WILL NOT OBEY FOR THE SAME REASON

- B. Witness of the Father through miracles (v. 36-38)
 1. Nicodemus, a Pharisee, admitted fact of miracles and Jesus' commission from God (John 3:2)
 2. Rulers later had to admit apostles worked miracles (Acts 4:16-17)
 - a. They could not deny the fact, so they persecuted
 3. There is more than sufficient testimony to support the factuality of miracles of Jesus
 - a. Testimony of conversions of thousands after being told of these miracles
 - b. Testimony of preachers who sacrificed lives to preach resurrection of Jesus
 - c. Testimony of Paul, former murderer of Christians
 - d. These miracles of Christ "were not done in a corner."

C. Witness of the Scriptures (39-40)

1. They were studying the Scriptures — and there was a way to eternal life indicated in the Old Testament.
 - a. Faith in and obedience to the Messiah when He should come (cf. Deut. 18:15)
 - b. See also Psalms 2, 22, and Isa. 53.
2. Details of Jesus' life prophesied — fulfilled to minutest detail

III CAUSE OF UNBELIEF IN HIS DEITY

A. Jews had not love of God in them

1. They wanted to glorify the Messiah temporally, BUT DID NOT WANT TO SUBMIT THEIR WILLS TO HIM . . . THEIR DEEDS AND THEIR MOTIVES
2. Men today deny deity of Jesus in the same manner
 - a. Have love of self, not love of God in them

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- b. Will not let Christ captivate their thoughts
- B. They wrested the Scriptures (v. 45-47)
 - 1. They regarded Jesus as an accuser
 - a. Cited their devotion to Moses
 - 2. They believed only so much of the Scriptures as suited their prejudiced ideas of the Messiah
 - a. But Moses will be their accuser, for he wrote of the Messiah and demanded they hearken unto Him
 - 3. Many today who fail to obey commands of the New Testament really rejecting the Scriptures which they claim to reverence.

Conclusion

I NOTICE PERFECT ONENESS OF WILLS OF FATHER AND SON

We need to recognize that in oneness with Lord's will is our own happiness.

- 1. John 15:10-11
- 2. John 13:17
- 3. Jesus had perfect, absolute joy in abiding in the Father's will
- 4. He told us His secret of peace, happiness and joy; remaining in the Father's will

II NOTICE THE FACTUAL EVIDENCE TO ESTABLISH JESUS' DEITY

- A. John the Baptist — an eyewitness to the descent of the Spirit upon Jesus.
- B. Miracles of Jesus — the greatest of which is resurrection
- C. The Old Testament Scriptures — fulfilled prophecy

III NOTICE WHERE YOU STAND TODAY ON THIS MATTER OF JESUS' DEITY

- A. With the Pharisees?
They loved self — did not want Him to rule in their hearts
- B. With the disciples?
"To whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life" (John 6:68-69).