

John 5:19-29

II. Jesus Reveals Himself to the World (1:19-12:50)

H. The Second Sign – Healing the Nobleman’s Son (4:43-54)

I. The Third Sign – Healing of the Lame Man (5:1-18)

J. The Third Discourse – The Divine Son, Part One (5:18-29)

Verse 18 serves as a transition from the third miracle to the third discourse. At this point, the Jews were seeking to kill Jesus, not only because of His Sabbath-breaking, but all the more because they were realizing that He was *making Himself equal with God* (v. 18). For His part, Jesus isn’t going to shy away from this discussion; indeed, He’s going to lean into it. Verse 19 begins with *Jesus answered and said to them*. If the Jews wanted to accuse Jesus, He’s going to give them an earful about it!

This passage can be divided into three sections, all beginning with the phrase, *most assuredly, I say to you* (vv. 19, 24, 25; NIV: *very truly*; NASB/ESV: *truly truly*). The first section, vv. 19-23, highlights the relationship between the Father and the Son. The Son, as *the express image of His person* (Heb 1:3), the *image of the invisible God* (Col 1:15), does what the Father does and has told Him to do (John 5:19-20).

One such example of their similar works is the giving of life. *As the Father raises the dead and gives life to them, even so the Son gives life to whom He will* (v. 21). The context here is that the *life* is *everlasting life* (vv. 24, 29). We note again in the Gospel of John, how it’s the Lord who decides who receives life. Hence the NIV: *the Son gives life to whom he is pleased to give it*. Or the NASB: *the Son also gives life to whom He wishes*. Once again, God does all the work, not only providing for our eternal life, but choosing those to whom He will give it! It’s all of His grace! We bring nothing to the table!

In v. 22, we read of a responsibility that the Father has passed down to the Son, that of *judgment*. We’ll come back to this in v. 27. But in the meantime, Jesus says that, as a result of the Son holding the power of judgment, *all should honor the Son just as they honor the Father* (v. 23). We read this in our context today and might not think much of it. But think of what was going through the Jews’ minds upon hearing this. Not only is this Man claiming to be the Son of God, but He’s now saying that we ought to honor Him as we honor the Father! That would be some pretty heavy blasphemy if it weren’t true! As a point of application for us today, may we recognize that there’s no honoring or worship God if Jesus is not seen as the Son. As a result, no one claiming to know or worship God is actually doing so if they deny Jesus is the Son of God!

The second section in this passage occurs in v. 24. It’s the shortest section, but it also gets to the heart of John’s theme of the Gospel:

Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life.

If these Jews – and we today – want to avoid the Son’s judgment and instead experience this life, the prerequisite is simple and straightforward: *believe*. When we believe, we pass *from death into life*. Eternal life isn’t something we gain when we die; eternal life is our present possession now. We have that new life now. We are given that new nature, we have been born again, and we can live lives that are pleasing to the Lord now. While we may experience that life in greater fullness when the Lord calls us home, we ought not to throw our hands up in the air and give up trying to live our lives pleasing to Him today.

At the end of it all, though, the point can't be underscored enough. Believing in Jesus' person and work is the sole and simple way to have eternal life!

With that, we arrive at the third and final section of our passage, vv. 25-29. While Jesus will continue this third discourse in our passage next week, He does move on from these motifs of life and judgment. Here in vv. 25-29, Jesus is looking forward to that time when He will come again and execute judgment over the earth. We'll recall from John 3 that judgment and condemnation weren't the purpose behind His First Coming (John 3:17; cf. Matt 20:28; Mark 10:45; Luke 19:10). Indeed, it was to bring deliverance to those who were already condemned (John 3:18-19).

But, when Jesus returns, the time for deliverance will be over. The Father *has given Him authority to execute judgment*, and He will indeed do so (v. 27). On that day, *all who are in the graves will hear His voice and come forth* (v. 28). In v. 29, we have one of three main passages that speak of two different resurrections.¹ For *those who have done good*, they will experience **the resurrection of life**. For *those who have done evil*, they will experience **the resurrection of condemnation**. These two resurrections are first hinted at in Daniel 12:2.

*And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to **everlasting life**, some to **shame and everlasting contempt**.*

Fittingly, the two are contrasted yet again in Revelation 20, where John writes that **the first resurrection** is for the *blessed and holy*, and *over such the second death has no power* (vv. 5-6). The **second death**, however, is for those *not found written in the Book of Life*, whose end is being *cast into the lake of fire* (vv. 14-15).

In John 5, at great offense to the Jews, Jesus is presenting His Gospel yet again, setting Himself up as the sinless Son of God, sent to do the work of the Father. For anyone who believes in Him, they will avoid His future judgment, instead experiencing the grace of eternal life.

¹We could also bring Matt 25:32-46; Luke 14:7-14; John 6:35-58; and Acts 24:15 into the discussion, as well.