

JOH 5:16 "So, because Jesus was doing these things on the Sabbath, the Jews persecuted him. 17 Jesus said to them, "My Father is always at his work to this very day, and I, too, am working." 18 For this reason the Jews tried all the harder to kill him; not only was he breaking the Sabbath, but he was even calling God his own Father, making himself equal with God. 19 Jesus gave them this answer: "I tell you the truth, the Son can do nothing by himself; he can do only what he sees his Father doing, because whatever the Father does the Son also does. 20 For the Father loves the Son and shows him all he does. Yes, to your amazement he will show him even greater things than these. 21 For just as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, even so the Son gives life to whom he is pleased to give it. 22 Moreover, the Father judges no one, but has entrusted all judgment to the Son, 23 that all may honor the Son just as they honor the Father. He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father, who sent him. 24 "I tell you the truth, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life."

As we begin with verse 16 of our text which states, "because Jesus was doing these things on the Sabbath, the Jews persecuted him," we need to point out what "these things" were. The context has to do with Jesus healing a lame man on the Sabbath.

The contention of the Jews is that to do any type of work on the Sabbath is a violation of God's law, and yet what we find is that these same people do not understand the law when it comes to certain types of benevolent work which the law encourages, even on the Sabbath.

In the healing on the Sabbath of a crippled woman, Jesus was again confronted by the Jews for this act. And yet our Lord reminds them that the law does not prohibit such things as He uses the analogy of meeting the needs of animals.

LUK 13:14-16 "Indignant because Jesus had healed on the Sabbath, the synagogue ruler said to the people, "There are six days for work. So come and be healed on those days, not on the Sabbath." 15 The Lord answered him, "You hypocrites! Doesn't each of you on the Sabbath untie his ox or donkey from the stall and lead it out to give it water? 16 Then should not this woman, a

daughter of Abraham, whom Satan has kept bound for eighteen long years, be set free on the Sabbath day from what bound her?"

By the way, the law Jesus infers from this is found in the book of Deuteronomy which spells out what to do with an animal in need. And you'll notice there is no restriction as to what day this can be accomplished.

DEU 22:1 "If you see your brother's ox or sheep straying, do not ignore it but be sure to take it back to him."

If we are to be compassionate to stray animals why in the world should we not be compassionate to people in need, even on the Sabbath, is our Lord's point.

But what we're told in verse 16 of our text is that the Jews actually persecuted Jesus for this act of compassion on the man who was lame. And by persecuted the text means that Jesus feared for His well-being, either because of threats or actual bodily harm which might be directed toward Him.

What jealousy and hatred must have filled the hearts of these Jewish leaders that they would have persecuted Jesus for healing this man. But you can bet if someone were beating one of their own animals and Jesus came along and rescued their animal He would probably have been hailed as a hero.

How twisted is their understanding of justice and the law. But this is because of their twisted hearts which are full of hate.

But what is interesting in our text is that, unlike other portions of God's word which give us the accounts of Jesus healing on the Sabbath, where He defends His actions by pointing to compassion toward animals, for example, here He doesn't do that.

He doesn't defend Himself by appealing to compassion. Instead, He defends Himself by defining His authority and deity.

JOH 5:17-18 "Jesus said to them, "My Father is always at his work to this very day, and I, too, am working." 18 For this reason the Jews tried all the harder to kill him; not only was he breaking the Sabbath, but he was even calling God his own Father, making himself equal with God."

Now, we might ask, how did the Jews get out of this statement from Jesus that He was making Himself equal with God? Well, let's look at it.

"My Father is always at his work to this very day, and I, too, am working."

The first thing to be pointed out is that Jesus calls God His Father. Now, obviously this must be different from you or me calling God our Father, which by the way He is if we are in Christ.

Even Jesus Himself encourages Christians to call God our Father. We need only go the pattern for prayer He gives His disciples when He says, "This, then, is how you should pray: "Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven." (MAT 6:9-10)

Even these Jews persecuting Jesus were encouraged to call God their Father. Isaiah was a man who prayed on behalf of Israel and he prays in this very way.

ISA 64:8 "Yet, O LORD, you are our Father. We are the clay, you are the potter; we are all the work of your hand."

So, why do these Jews want to kill Jesus for Him calling God His Father? Let's look again at the verse.

JOH 5:17 "Jesus said to them, "My Father is always at his work to this very day, and I, too, am working."

What we may not see in the English is clear to the Jews who heard this. Jesus was saying that the very work God does, I am doing. And by associating Himself with God's works in this way He was distinguishing Himself from mere men who cannot make such works.

And so, calling God His Father, in this context, is to say He came directly from the bosom of God, if you will, like a son comes from his father, and does the same works that only God can do.

The Jews understood exactly what Jesus was saying. There would have been no other reason for them to want to kill Him. As far as they were concerned Jesus was blaspheming God by making Himself equal with God.

Now the other issue which comes up, which actually supports Jesus' claim to be equal with God, are the works He mentions to these Jews.

"My Father is always at his work to this very day, and I, too, am working."

The Jews were quite aware that God the Father was continuing to do work, or good deeds, in the world. They knew that it was God's work to hold the universe together. They knew that it was God's work to bring the rain and sunshine and bring life to the crops.

They knew that only God could continue to do these works for mankind, despite Him resting on the seventh day after He created the universe. In other words, God is always at work. He's not restricted from doing works on any day.

They also knew that God alone could work miracles. They were quite aware of what the Scriptures taught regarding the power of God. Now, here's the issue that the Jews had to contend with as it pertained to Jesus making this claim that He was doing the same works of His Father.

Since the Sabbath is not for God but for man, and since therefore God is not restricted from doing work on the Sabbath, they fully understood that Jesus was saying that whatever work He did on the Sabbath, as it pertained to God's will, was the equivalent of God doing such a work, who is not restricted by the Sabbath.

This is not to say that Jesus did not humble Himself under the law, since He is fully God and fully man. He kept the Sabbath law perfectly. But the Sabbath law did not restrict acts of compassion and mercy.

And so, He neither violated the law as a man, nor as God. But in doing a miracle, which only God can do, and then saying that He is doing the works the Father does, is to say that He is God, since only God can do such works.

This is why they wanted to kill Him. As far as they are concerned He is only a man who has now blasphemed their God who clearly has said in the book of Isaiah....

ISA 46:9-10 "... I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like me. 10 I make known the end from the beginning, from ancient times, what is still to come. I say: My purpose will stand, and I will do all that I please."

Jesus has just told these people that by healing on the Sabbath He is only doing what the Father would do and He is doing all that He pleases since He is sent from the Father and equal with the Father.

But our Lord doesn't stop there. He continues to teach them who He is and why He has such authority.

JOH 5:19-20 "Jesus gave them this answer: "I tell you the truth, the Son can do nothing by himself; he can do only what he sees his Father doing, because whatever the Father does the Son also does. 20 For the Father loves the Son and shows him all he does. Yes, to your amazement he will show him even greater things than these."

This is probably one of the strongest statements by Jesus declaring Himself equal with God and yet there are those who would take such a statement and conclude that Jesus is anything but equal with God. Let's see why.

JOH 5:19 "Jesus gave them this answer: "I tell you the truth, the Son can do nothing by himself; he can do only what he sees his Father doing, because whatever the Father does the Son also does."

Those like the Mormons or Jehovah's witnesses, or any other cult who tell us that Jesus is not the true God, look at this verse and conclude that because Jesus cannot do anything by Himself obviously He is less than the Father. Since Jesus can only do what He sees His Father doing obviously He is dependent on the Father, and by definition is not equal with the Father.

The truth of the matter is that you have to distort this verse to arrive at that conclusion. In fact, even some Christians will look at this statement and conclude that what Jesus is saying refers to His limitations in the flesh as a man. But again, we must let the Scriptures speak for themselves.

Is there another passage in the context which aligns itself with verse 19 to bring more clarity? Absolutely.

JOH 5:30 "By myself I can do nothing; I judge only as I hear, and my judgment is just, for I seek not to please myself but him who sent me."

The NASB puts verse 30 like this.

"I can do nothing on my own initiative. As I hear, I judge; and My judgment is just, because I do not seek My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me."

The judging that Jesus addresses here is a just judgment of all men that the Jews would have understood as being reserved only for the Father. It is in this context that Jesus then connects the phrase, "the Son can do nothing by himself" utilizing the third person description of the Son, and then defining the Son as Himself in the first person description in the last part of verse 30.

Let's put them side by side.

Verse 19 "... *the Son* can do nothing by *himself*;"

Verse 30 "... *By myself I can do nothing*; for *I seek not to please myself* but him who sent me."

What Jesus is saying is that the Son of God and I are the same and that 'I do not act according to My will, but My will is in accordance to the will of the Father who sent Me, the Son.' In other words, 'My Father and I are in complete agreement when it comes to doing anything.' 'His will is My will and My will is His will.'

That doesn't make Jesus less than the Father. That makes Jesus equal with the Father since both do nothing out of accord with each other. They both agree on what needs to be done and Jesus carries out that will.

Well, someone might say that Jesus is obviously less than the Father since He cannot act independently of the Father. But as A.W. Pink points out this doesn't show how Christ is inferior to the Father, only that it is part of the divine nature of God not to act out of accord with Himself in any of the persons of the Godhead, be that the Son or the Holy Spirit.

In other words, as Pink illustrates, "we don't conclude that when God says He cannot lie that He is any less God. And when the Scriptures tell us that He cannot be tempted by evil that He is any less God. And yet, these so called limitations of God don't deny His deity but only reinforce His nature."

The same is true of Jesus when He says that I do only what My Father has shown Me. Why? Because both He and the Father are always on the same page and Jesus cannot do anything that would be out of accord with the Father. That's not a limitation, but confirms the very nature of God who cannot deny Himself.

This is why Jesus can say later in this same gospel that "I and the Father are one." (Joh.10:30)

There is no greater statement that Jesus Christ is God. For these cults to suggest that He is less than God or that He is a lesser god than the Father is simply to ignore the plain teaching of the Scriptures.

Though this may be lost on the cults it was not lost on the Jews. They understood that Jesus was making a clear statement that He

was God by saying that He was doing the works of God the Father. Thus they wanted to kill Him.

JOH 5:20 "For the Father loves the Son and shows him all he does. Yes, to your amazement he will show him even greater things than these."

Notice that Jesus doesn't say, "the Father loves Me." No, He says, "the Father loves the Son."

The reason Jesus puts Himself in the third person like this is to distinguish for these Jews that the Son is the one prophesied to be sent by God from heaven to earth to accomplish the will of the Father as He will sit on David's eternal throne.

^{NAU} **Isaiah 9:6** For a child will be born to us, *a son will be given to us*; And the government will rest on His shoulders; And His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, *Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace*. ⁷ There will be no end to the increase of *His* government or of peace, On the throne of David and over his kingdom,

And of course Jesus clearly identifies that He is the descendant of David who will rule and reign forever.

^{NAU} **Revelation 22:16** "I, Jesus, have sent My angel to testify to you these things for the churches. *I am the root and the descendant of David, the bright morning star.*"

And in this way Jesus has told these Jews that the Father loves Him because He, (that is Jesus), is that one sent from heaven, since heaven is His primary abode if you will, thus making Him equal with God who sent Him, not as an angel, but as His Son.

In other words, they are of the same nature, like my son or daughter is of the same nature as me, being a human being. The Son of God and the Father are of the same nature, being very God.

And because of this Jesus can say at the end of verse 20, "Yes, to your amazement he [the Father] will show him [Jesus] even greater things than these.

Greater things than what? The things Jesus just did in healing the lame man miraculously. In this way Jesus is saying to these Jews that the Father and He are not done doing works that only God can do. The greater works will involve more miraculous healings but would certainly include those spiritual miracles which include

turning the hearts of spiritually dead people so they may receive life eternal.

In fact, Jesus points out the spiritual aspect of this type of work only God can do by raising the bar to not just healing the physical body, but also restoring that life that was originally given to Adam in the Garden of Eden.

JOH 5:21 "For just as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, even so the Son gives life to whom he is pleased to give it."

We must not miss the implication here. Jesus has just made a comparison between Himself and God. This is unheard of. He has just said that God and only God can raise the dead. In other words, God can bring life back to a mortal body.

But Jesus goes on to say that just as God the Father can give life to a mortal body, I [Jesus] can give life as well to whom I am pleased to give it.

This shows us a number of things, but one thing it demonstrates is what we spoke of earlier and that is how the will and the power of the Father and the will and the power of the Son are identical and neither do anything out of accord with each other since they are one in essence and being only one God.

Jesus says, "My Father gives life and then He says I [Jesus] give life to anyone I am pleased to give it to." In other words, if Jesus chooses to give life to someone it is a choice He makes. But, though He makes the choice, it is a choice the Father would have made, since they work and will to do the same thing.

Again, this is another example of how Jesus is declaring Himself to be God, since only God can give such life. But Jesus is not referring only to bringing a dead mortal body back to mortal life. He is alluding to a life beyond this world which involves bodily resurrection from perishable life to imperishable eternal life.

JOH 11:25 "Jesus said to her [Martha], "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies..."

Only God can raise someone from the dead. And only God can raise someone to eternal life. Jesus has just told us that this is what He will do because this is what His Father desires. Jesus does all the Father desires because He can do it. And He will do it.

As we go through our text here it becomes obvious that our Lord Jesus is going down a list of things only God can do. But Jesus is

making it clear that God has given Him these things to do, be it raising the dead or healing a lame man, or judging the world.

JOH 5:22-23 "Moreover, the Father judges no one, but has entrusted all judgment to the Son, 23 that all may honor the Son just as they honor the Father. ..."

Again, this is an amazing statement of how Jesus is none other than the God and creator of the universe.

Let's look.

JOH 5:22 "Moreover, the Father judges no one, but has entrusted all judgment to the Son,..."

The first thing to consider is, what judgment is Jesus referring to here? Again, comparing Scripture to Scripture we know that He is not speaking about any present judgment during His earthly ministry since Jesus has made it clear in this gospel that He did not come to judge the world but to save it. (Joh 12:47)

But that is different from saying that judging this world and the people in it at some time will not take place. And when it does Jesus Christ, the Son of God, will be actively involved in that process. Why? Because God the Father has declared that He will be the One who will be given that honor.

ACT 17:31 "For he [the Father] has set a day when he will judge the world with justice by the man he has appointed. He has given proof of this to all men by raising him from the dead."

Here Luke explains that the Father will judge the world through the man whom He has appointed. Well, of course the man being spoken of is no mere man, but the Son of God who became man, and then rose from the dead after He paid our debt for sin.

Only God, (the Creator), can judge men, (His creation), and therefore Jesus Christ the God/man is none other than the God who has such authority to judge men. Concerning this day of future judgment Paul says this.

ROM 2:16 "This will take place on the day when God will judge men's secrets through Jesus Christ, as my gospel declares."

2CO 5:10 "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive what is due him for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad."

In a sense Jesus is saying that He will actually do something greater than the Father, as far as these Jews are concerned, since He has been given an authority to be the agent by whom this world will be judged in the future as the Father mandates for the Son to accomplish this judgment.

All people will be judged. Many will be declared not guilty because they have trusted in the redemptive work of Jesus Christ who came the first time, not to judge the world, but to save it. But this same Jesus is the one who will ultimately judge everyone including the guilty and they will pay the debt they owe to God because of their sin and their rejection of Christ, and they will pay that debt for all of eternity.

To honor the Son as God, Savior, Lord and Judge is to honor God the Father who sent the Son into this world to save us from our sins and give us eternal life through the resurrection of our Lord Jesus.

For Jesus to receive the same honor as the Father is to place Jesus equal with the Father, because we know that God will not share His glory with another. If one does not believe on the Lord Jesus he does not honor the Father who sent Him.

JOH 5:24 "I tell you the truth, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life."

Up to this point Jesus has been making the case that the Son of God, sent from the Father, is doing the same work with the same purpose as the Father. Jesus is alluding to Himself in the third person, being the Son, as He makes His case to the Jews that He and the Father are one.

But as we come to verse 24 Jesus identifies Himself in the first person, as the One sent from the Father, as we see in our text, "he who hears *My* word, and believes Him who sent *Me*, has eternal life, (John 5:24)

And as we move throughout different portions of this gospel it is clear that the Son of God, sent from the Father and prophesied as the Son of David, is none other than Jesus of Nazareth, who was sent from the Father.

John 6:57 ⁵⁷ "As the *living Father sent Me*, and I live because of the Father, so he who eats Me, he also will live because of Me.

^{NAU} **John 3:17** "*For God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world*, but that the world might be saved through Him.

^{NAU} **John 6:38** "For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, *but the will of Him who sent Me*.

And of course, the apostle Peter understood this.

^{NAU} **Matthew 16:16** Simon Peter answered, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."

Can you imagine how the Jews must have received this word from Jesus? Who would speak in such a way? Either a lunatic, a liar, or the Lord. Jesus is the Lord of glory. He will one day judge all men and He has just told these Jews how they can escape a judgment of "guilty as charged."

The guilty charge brings condemnation. The not guilty charge, as we believe in what God has done for us through Christ, brings eternal life as we cross over from death to life.

Let's weigh this thing out. Condemnation; life. Eternal separation from God; eternal life with God. Guilty; not guilty. Pay your own debt; let Jesus pay your debt.

Do you see what Jesus is offering these Jews, and what He offers the world? People need to make a choice; either believe that Jesus is who He says He is; the God/man who died for our sin and who rose from the dead, or reject Him in favor of our own path which leads to destruction.

It would seem like a no-brainer, but people would rather trust in self than in the God who came to give life. This is why we need to pray that God would open the eyes of people and that we might have the opportunity to give them the gospel of Jesus Christ. Either way Jesus will have the final say as God, Savior and Judge.

REV 22:12-14,16-17 "Behold, I am coming soon! My reward is with me, and I will give to everyone according to what he has done. 13 I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End. 14 "Blessed are those who wash their robes, that they may have the right to the tree of life and may go through the gates into the city. 16 "I, Jesus, have sent my angel to give you this testimony for the churches. I am the Root and the Offspring of David, and the bright Morning Star." 17 The Spirit and the bride say, "Come!" And let him who hears say, "Come!"

Whoever is thirsty, let him come; and whoever wishes, let him take the free gift of the water of life."