

Jesus' Sevenfold Vindication of His Deity

By David Harrell

Bible Text: John 5:16-29

Preached on: Sunday, March 30, 2014

It is with great joy that I come before you to minister the word of God to you this morning so will you take your Bibles and turn to John's gospel. We are in John 5 and this morning we are going to look at verses 16-29 and I've entitled my discourse to you "Jesus' Sevenfold Vindication of His Deity."

We know that Jesus has just healed a man that has been crippled for 38 years. The man, according to verse 15, went away and told the Jews that it was Jesus who had made him well and then beginning in verse 16 we read this,

"16 For this reason the Jews were persecuting Jesus, because He was doing these things on the Sabbath. 17 But He answered them, 'My Father is working until now, and I Myself am working.'

"18 For this cause therefore the Jews were seeking all the more to kill Him, because He not only was breaking the Sabbath, but also was calling God His own Father, making Himself equal with God. 19 Therefore Jesus answered and was saying to them, 'Truly, truly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of Himself, unless it is something He sees the Father doing; for whatever the Father does, these things the Son also does in like manner. 20 For the Father loves the Son, and shows Him all things that He Himself is doing; and the Father will show Him greater works than these, so that you will marvel. 21 For just as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, even so the Son also gives life to whom He wishes. 22 For not even the Father judges anyone, but He has given all judgment to the Son, 23 in order that all may honor the Son even as they honor the Father. He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent Him. 24 Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears My word, and believes Him who sent Me, has eternal life, and does not come into judgment, but has passed out of death into life.

"25 'Truly, truly, I say to you, an hour is coming and now is, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear shall live. 26 For just as the Father has life in Himself, even so He gave to the Son also to have life in Himself; 27 and He gave Him authority to execute judgment, because He is the Son of Man. 28 Do not marvel at this; for an hour is coming, in which all who are in the tombs shall hear His voice, 29 and shall come forth; those who did the good deeds to a resurrection of life, those who committed the evil deeds to a resurrection of judgment."

It must have been absolutely amazing to hear the promised Messiah of Old Testament prophecy proclaim the glorious news of the kingdom that was at hand, the very King standing in the midst of the people. It must have been astounding to witness his miracles that authenticated his regal claim as Messiah of Israel, but what I think is probably most astounding of all and what tends to arrest my attention as I read these passages is how all of what Jesus did resulted in malice rather than in worship. How could this have happened? Well, the answer is because man is dead in his sin and his carnal mind is hostile to God. This is why earlier Jesus tells the religious teacher of Israel, Nicodemus, that you must be born again.

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The natural man, we know according to Scripture, is devoid of spiritual life, he is under the curse of God, he is a spiritual corpse that must be raised from death to life. We saw this earlier in this chapter when Jesus was at the pool of Bethesda where a large gathering of helpless, blind, crippled, paralyzed people placed their faith in a superstition, a ghastly picture of man's sinful nature and our utter inability to save ourselves. But in the midst of their abject misery comes the Great Physician. He's unnoticed, he's unwanted and there he gives new life to a man, both physically and spiritually. But what was the response of the people, especially the Jewish leaders? Worship? Praise? Rejoicing? Coming to him that they too, might have life? No. Their response was persecution because Jesus had violated the rules they had added to the Old Testament Sabbath regulations. Worse yet, Jesus claimed to be equal with God and so the persecution escalates. The Jewish authorities want to put him to death. What an amazing picture: Jesus, the Son of God, offers mercy and grace but man wants a god of his own choosing. He wants a religion of his own doing.

You know, nothing would be any different today if Jesus came to earth. Think about it: he would come and do miracles and all of the people would say, "Wow! You have got to see this guy. You've got to see what he's doing." But then Jesus would say, "God the Father, my Father and I, are equal." All of a sudden people would say, "What is this guy saying?" And then he would go on to say, "You know, you people are spiritually dead by nature. There is nothing about you that conforms to the moral character or desires of God." Now all of a sudden, the people are beginning to bristle. Then he would go on to say, "Because of your innate corruption you are alienated from God and his wrath is upon you. You are utterly unable to save yourselves. You must believe in me or you will perish in your sins. I am the way, the truth and the life. No man can even come to the Father except through me."

You know, it's not really hard to imagine what the response today would be because in many ways, we experience it whenever we present the gospel. People are horribly offended with this but, my friends, you must realize that because of the unyielding power of sin in the human nature, man will reject the one true God if he asks him to receive what he insists he does not need and does not want. The world sees no need for a Savior because they see nothing regarding their sin. Think of our world and how it portrays Christ today: the prosperity gospel that is preached to millions around the world. The perverted gospel of Joel Osteen and Joyce Meyer would have us believe that God is a stingy but benevolent God that will give you stuff if you do the right things so you have to obey certain things, you have to have the right kind of faith and, "Oh, by the way, you've got to give our ministry some money."

Then, there is the Christ of Hollywood. You remember a few years ago the movie "The Passion of the Christ" and as I read how people perceived that movie and really what was presented, they said that this speaks of the power of the human spirit, of man's potential to love and sacrifice for fellow man. This helps us understand the need to maintain freedom of religion, to put down the tyranny of religious bigotry. One of the theology professors here at Vanderbilt said, "Jesus is a model of non-violent resistance. The cross a symbol of dying to self." But there is nothing in that movie that would help a person understand that this is a portrayal of the Incarnate Son of God who came to bear the wrath of God as a substitute for sinners that we might be reconciled to him. No one comes away with that.

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These profound truths are also noticeably absent in one of the most popular books about Jesus today, a book written by a man named Bill O'Reilly entitled "Killing Jesus," a biography of Jesus and the events that lead up to his death. And now there is a new movie out, a movie called "Noah." This is a personal preference but I would refuse personally to see it because it is such a profound distortion of the word of God. From critics that I trust, I learned that God is described as the Creator and the whole story is that the Creator is punishing man for destroying the environment and killing animals to eat and so forth. It's nothing about a holy God judging man for sin and yet in his mercy providing a preacher and an ark to save those who repent and believe, a beautiful picture of the gospel of grace and faith in Christ.

So, the world does not know God. It does not understand him. It does not understand Christ. But the amazing fact is the truth of who he is, is found in his self-revelation in the word of God. The truth of who Jesus was and who he is to this day is clearly delineated, much of it right here in this text today. Today we are going to hear from Jesus' very lips the testimony of the eternal Son of God. Now, you say you are a Christian? Great. Do you really know Christ? If somebody were to come to you and say, "Tell me about your Jesus." What would you say? Well, hopefully you will have a lot more to say in a few minutes than maybe you have right now.

What we are going to find in this text is that Jesus claims equality with the Father in seven ways: in his providential workings, in his perfect oneness of will, his perfect oneness of intimacy, his sovereign authority as life-giver, his judicial authority in judgment, his deserved oneness in honor and finally, his power to raise the dead. Once again, we have the privilege of contemplating the unsearchable riches of Christ and it's my prayer that each of you today will not only hear and believe his testimony but be moved to worship him and celebrate his undeserved grace in your life.

So, we get a running start here in the narrative beginning in verse 15, "The man," referring to the man that was healed, "went away, and told the Jews that it was Jesus who had made him well. For this reason the Jews were persecuting Jesus, because He was doing these things on the Sabbath. But He answered them, 'My Father is working until now, and I Myself am working.'" Here he confronts the Jewish authorities with the reality that he is working like the Father. So, Jesus claims equality with the Father, #1 in his providential workings. Now, we know according to the word of God, that as Creator, God is continually involved in maintaining and directing all that he has created. He is orchestrating all the variables in this world to accomplish his purposes. This is the doctrine of divine providence. The Jews understood this to be true but here, in light of this Sabbath controversy, Jesus makes it clear that although God rested from his creative work on the seventh day which, by the way, merely means that he ceased from his creative activities, God did not do so because he was tired but, rather, to set an example for men who would need to rest at least one day out of the week. The Jews understood this from Exodus 20:9-11. We also know, by the way, that God set aside the Sabbath as a day of memorial, a reminder that God created the world in six days.

So, Jesus is implying here that the Sabbath day of rest was for man, it was not for God. The Jews understood according to Isaiah 40:28 that God is "The Everlasting God, the LORD, the Creator of the ends of the earth who does not become weary or tired." But even though God ceased from any further creative activity on the seventh day, he did not cease his work of divine providence. This is Jesus' point so Jesus says to them, "My Father is working until now, and I Myself am working." In other words, I am equal to the Father and, therefore, not restricted to Sabbath

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regulations, especially the ones you all have made up. In fact, he will say in Matthew 12:8 that the Son of man is the Lord of the Sabbath. So, Jesus is saying, “By indicting me of wrongdoing, you are ultimately indicting God.” Well, if you think the Jewish leaders were upset because he violated the Sabbath, therefore, undermining their authority, this statement brings it to a whole new level. Verse 18 he goes on and John tells us, “For this cause therefore the Jews were seeking all the more to kill Him, because He not only was breaking the Sabbath, but also was calling God His own Father, making Himself equal with God.”

Now, Jesus doesn't stop here. He's just getting warmed up. Notice what he says in verse 19, “Therefore Jesus answered and was saying to them, 'Truly, truly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of Himself, unless it is something He sees the Father doing; for whatever the Father does, these things the Son also does in like manner.’” He says unless it is something he sees. The term means “to perceive,” something that he perceives, that he knows the Father is doing. So, here Jesus claims equality with the Father in #2, his perfect oneness of will. Beginning in verse 19, by the way, Jesus moves from a dialogue into a monologue as he continues to make his case. Now, Jesus tells them in this text that he never acts independently from the Father. Again, “The Son can do nothing of Himself,” literally nothing out of or from himself. Nothing originates with him alone. The point is: he does nothing out of his own initiative, that's the point. There is no self-will in the Son, thus he claims perfect oneness of will with the Father.

Now, think of the implications of what Jesus is saying regarding the Jews's claim that he had violated the Sabbath. Such a charge was utter blasphemy because the Son is eternally one with the Father and whatever he does perfectly harmonizes with the will of the Father. So Jesus, again, is saying, “You attack me, you attack him.” Jesus elaborates on this further in verse 20, “For the Father loves the Son, and shows Him all things that He Himself is doing.” This speaks #3, of his perfect oneness of intimacy, his perfect oneness of intimacy. Here we learn as well as what we find in many other passages, that there exists between the Father and the Son a love that is so ineffable, so deep, so uninterrupted that no secret, no conflict, no inequality can ever exist between them. They possess the same nature. They exhibit the same character. So, Jesus builds upon what he has already stated. The continuous self-disclosure from the Father to the Son and the continuous obedience from the Son to the Father is a reciprocal expression of love for one another, a perfect oneness of intimacy.

You know, an amazing and very practical truth emerges from this and that is this: if you want to know God, you need to know Jesus. It's real simple. If you want to know the Father, you must know the Son. Jesus will say later on in chapter 10 that “I and the Father are one.” He will say in chapter 12, “He who sees me, sees the one who sent me.” And in chapter 14, “He who has seen me has seen the Father.” The point is this: the Father and the Son are so united that they share the same nature, the same essence. Jesus possesses all of the divine excellencies of the Father so everything Jesus does is a revelation of the Father, a revelation of God. We are told in the New Testament that we see the glory of God in the face of Christ and it was his love for the Father that ultimately nailed him to a cross to purchase our redemption and glorify his Father. And we know according to Scripture, that it is the Holy Spirit that leads believers into this same love, this intimacy of the Father and the Son.

So, think of this: because of their love for us, the Father sent his perfectly obedient Son to die for the elect. It's an amazing concept in Scripture. It's perfectly summarized in the lyrics that read,

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“From heaven he came and sought her
To be his holy bride;
With his blood he bought her,
And for her life he died.”

This is Jesus, dear friends. This is the one we worship, the lover of our soul.

“Jesus loves me this I know,
For the Bible tells me so.”

Our children understand it and we must celebrate it. This is why we should hang on every word. This is why when we come to the word of God, we must meditate on every expression that the Lord speaks through his word. This is why we should obey every command. This is why we should constantly find ourselves lost in the wonder of his glory and celebrate his grace. To think that he loved us and gave himself for us, that he bore our sins specifically in his body and to think that we love him for one reason and that's because he first loved us.

So, Jesus says in verse 20, “For the Father loves the Son, and shows Him all things that He Himself is doing,” then he adds this, “and greater works than these,” will he show him, “so that you will marvel.” Now, we know that he had just healed the man that was severely crippled for 38 years. Soon he's going to raise the dead and he's alluding to this in verse 21 as we will see. Ultimately, he is going to be the Judge of all mankind as he's going to describe in verse 22 and following. But there are so many more works that will cause them to marvel so think of the flow of his vindication thus far: he is equal to the Father in his providential workings, in his perfect oneness of will, his perfect oneness of intimacy and next Jesus claims equality with the Father in #4, his sovereign authority as life-giver. Verse 21, “For just as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, even so the Son also gives life to whom He wishes.” Sometimes the phrase “gives life to” is translated in the Old English and we get the word “quicken.” He quickens whom he wishes.

Now, this claim would have stunned the Jews not only because it violated their distorted and weak understanding of Scripture but also the second of the Shemoneh Esrei, which means “The Eighteen Benedictions” of the Jewish prayerbook that was in common use in that day, would have told them about God's quickening power that Jesus now claims. There we read this, “Thou, O Lord, art mighty forever. Thou quickenest the dead. Thou art strong to save. Thou sustainest the living by thy mercy. Thou quickenest the dead by thy great compassion. Thou makest good thy faithfulness to them that sleep in the dust. Thou art faithful to quicken the dead. Blessed art thou, O Lord, who quickenest the dead.” The Jews knew that only God could raise the dead. They knew this, of course, even from the Old Testament. In Deuteronomy 32:39, we read, “There is no God besides me. It is I who put to death and give life.”

So, they were fully aware of this and they were fully aware of many of the examples of God raising the dead even in the Old Testament but Jesus is not merely speaking here about raising the dead physically and giving them life as he did, as you will recall, in chapter 4 with the nobleman's son. But he is also addressing his redemptive purposes. Like the Father, Jesus gives spiritual life to whom he wishes and this is one of the greater works Jesus referred to in verse 20.

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Now, may I remind you that all the greater works performed by Jesus belong equally to each person of the Triune Godhead and should not be seen as given or somehow received by one of them alone, however, through his Incarnation, the Son took upon himself that special work of redemption, the will of the Father. But, indeed, like the Father and the Spirit, the Son, as we see here, gives spiritual life to whom he wishes. For example, speaking of his atoning work, Jesus says in John 6:51, "I am the living bread that came down out of heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he shall live forever and the bread also which I shall give for the life of the world, is my flesh." But notice again the last phrase of verse 21, "the Son also gives life to whom He wishes." This clearly speaks of his uninfluenced sovereign choice to save. Once again, we saw this at the pool of Bethesda where out of all of those in need, he chose to save one man for no other reason than his own good pleasure. He does not quicken all men, only those whom he wishes.

Now, this is highly offensive to most people, especially many people that name the name of Christ. Many people are hostile to the doctrines of grace, of God's sovereignty in salvation. They don't like the idea that he alone has authority as life-giver. Many prefer to think that somehow we contribute to our salvation in some way, that we cooperate with God in some way. But as we will find in John 6, Jesus is going to say that all whom the Father gave to me, to the Son, before the foundation of the world, will ultimately come to the Son as a result of the Father's drawing and the Son will receive them unto himself and bring them to glory. By the way, people back then did not like this doctrine either because we read in verse 66, "As a result of this, many of his disciples withdrew and were not walking with him anymore."

So, Jesus claims to be equal to the Father in his sovereign authority as life-giver but he adds another claim, #5, he is equal to the Father in his judicial authority in judgment. Notice verse 22, "For not even the Father judges anyone, but He has given all judgment to the Son." This judgment will include the events that surround his Second Coming and then, at the end of the millennium, at the Great White Throne Judgment of unbelievers. For example, Jesus revealed the terrifying scene of his Second Coming, that particular judgment. He reveals it to John and in Revelation 19 we read that "he will come to wage war, to make war and from his mouth comes a sharp sword so that with it he may smite the nations and he will rule them with a rod of iron and he treads the winepress of the fierce wrath of God, the Almighty, and on his robe and on his thigh he has a name written, King of kings and Lord of lords."

Paul made it clear that a day is coming, according to 2 Thessalonians 1, beginning in verse 7, "when the Lord Jesus will be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels in flaming fire, dealing out retribution to those who do not know God and to those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus." And, beloved, I would submit to you as we look at the constellation of prophetic signs today, we can see that this day is probably coming very soon. But here in John 5, Jesus is specifically speaking of the final resurrection and judgment. He describes the final and ultimate raising of all the dead from their graves in verses 27-29 in connection with the resurrection of the unrighteous dead that will be summoned to the Great White Throne Judgment at the end of the millennium. We'll examine that more in a moment.

So, it's astounding to think what he is saying: that the Father has given the Son all judgment. That type of authority. In Acts 10:42, Peter declared that "Jesus is the one who has been appointed by God as judge of the living and the dead." He's very, very clear. Indeed, the person of the glorified Christ will sit in final judgment over unbelievers. Well, by now, the religious elite of Israel are apoplectic, they are absolutely seething in rage but Jesus is not finished. Not only has he claimed

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equality with the Father in his providential workings, in his perfect oneness of will, his perfect oneness of intimacy, his sovereign authority as life-giver and his judicial authority in judgment but #6, in his deserved oneness in honor. Again, notice the end of verse 22, the Father “has given all judgment to the Son,” verse 23, in order that, “all may honor the Son even as they honor the Father. He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent Him.”

My friends, this was absolute blasphemy to the Jews. The Jews were very familiar with Isaiah 42:8 and there God says, “I am the Lord, that is my name. I will not give my glory to another nor my praise to graven images.” And yet here, standing before them, is Jesus of Nazareth telling these Jewish leaders that the Father gives honor to the Son and whoever does not honor the Son does not honor the Father. In other words he's saying, “You men think that you are honoring God by contending for God's Sabbath law but in reality, you are dishonoring God by not honoring me, by refusing to hear and believe the Son who stands before you.”

Now, obviously because the Son is equal to the Father in all of these ways that we're seeing, he is deserving of the same honor, a truth that separates true believers from the cults. For example: atheists and agnostics today would say that Jesus was just a good man, some type of a legend. The theological liberals of the 18-19th centuries said that he was strictly a moral teacher, a model we should follow, but he was not to be the object of saving faith. By the way, those lies, the lies of higher criticism and so forth, ultimately eviscerated the truth of the gospel and as a result, we see the darkness of paganism covering Europe to this very day. You get Jesus wrong, you get it all wrong. The Jehovah's Witnesses tell us that he was just a created angel. The Jews of the first century said that he was demon possessed, he was insane, of illegitimate birth and of satanic origin. Jews today will say that he was just a good man and a teacher. The Mormons will tell us that he is one of many gods and the Father is yet another god. The Muslims tell us that he is a virgin-born prophet. The progressive liberal Christians and the Unitarians tell us that he is a good man and a social revolutionary. And I had a homosexual write me this last week and give me a scathing condemnation for my distortion of Jesus who he claims was a gay Jewish prophet.

Then there is the distorted Jesus of Roman Catholicism. Roman Catholicism advocates a false gospel and a worship of a false god by usurping the glory that belongs to the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit by creating a false goddess who has blasphemously been given the name Mary, the mother of Jesus. In their system, Mary is deified and considered to be the one through whom all graces, blessings and divine works pass to people. In their system, no one can be saved or blessed unless Mary intercedes. She is presented as all-knowing, all-wise, all-merciful, everywhere present and all-powerful. My friends, these are attributes that belong to God. Please understand as a footnote: it is a deadly deception to somehow classify the pope, the worship of Mary, the idolatry of the Mass and the entire Roman Catholic system as authentic genuine Christianity. My friends, I say this with love but based upon the authority of the word of God, that system is an apostate, corrupt, heretical, false Christianity that does not give honor to the Son. Again, it ultimately eviscerates the truth of the gospel and, therefore, it presents a false gospel that cannot save.

Jesus says, “He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent Him.” My friends, this text stands as a most solemn sentence of condemnation to every religious practice and profession that fails to honor the Son in all of his glorious perfections. Not to mention: the message that Jesus preached. In fact, the Father commands that all will honor the Son and will one day do it willingly or unwillingly. Paul speaks of this in Philippians 2, beginning in verse 9,

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“For this reason also, God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus EVERY KNEE WILL BOW, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”

Now notice what he says in verse 24 as he continues his claims to deity by expanding upon what he meant earlier concerning giving life to whom he will. Verse 24, “Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears My word, and believes Him who sent Me, has eternal life, and does not come into judgment, but has passed out of death into life.” Underscore the phrase “has eternal life.” He who hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life. It doesn't say “he receives it,” it doesn't say “he obtains it,” he has it. It is a present possession. In other words, only those who have been given everlasting life will hear and believe. Think about it: man must hear and believe but yet he cannot do so if he is spiritually dead. He needs to be born again. There is the requirement of eternal life that as we see here and in many other texts, depends upon Christ, not on man. We must be born of God. We are made partakers of the divine nature, Peter tells us, spiritual life originates from Christ himself. Therefore, what he is saying is that the believing heart, the hearing ear and the believing heart are the consequences, not the cause of, or the qualifications for eternal life. Believing in Jesus as Savior and Lord is ample evidence that man has received spiritual life. If I can put it very simply: it is regeneration that produces belief, not the other way around.

Now, in light of Jesus' clear statements, may I ask you: how is it that people can claim that a man can have eternal life in Christ one day and then because of something they do, lose it the next? My Bible says that they have eternal life. I think that means life that does not end. Eternal life, that they have passed out of death into life. It does not say “unless one apostatizes and then goes from life back into death again.” Eternal life means that there is no second death, it's not possible. Indeed, we will all die physically but not spiritually. The second we are born again, we have the life of Christ within us and that is the life that cannot expire. Jesus said, “Because I live, you shall live also.” Paul talked about the great mystery of salvation in the gospel, it's Christ in you, the hope of glory. So the penalty, we know, has been paid. We are forever acquitted and justice demands that we go free, that we have eternal life. It is our God-given eternal life that even caused us to hear and believe and it is that God-given eternal life that will cause us to persevere in the faith. So, Jesus makes it clear, “Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears My word, and believes Him who sent Me, has eternal life, and does not come into judgment, but has passed out of death into life.”

So, Christ gives life to whom he wills and those who have eternal life will be the ones who will hear and believe. They will be the ones that will not come into judgment because they have passed out of death into life. Said differently: when the word of God is preached, people hear the truth of the gospel. They hear that God must punish sin and that he has done so in the person of his Son and he has, therefore, through his Son, had his wrath appeased. The Son was made to be propitiation for sin and to whom Christ has given eternal life, those people are going to hear that word and they're going to believe. I find great comfort in that as a preacher of the gospel and I hope you do as well. I know that it's not up to me to say the right thing or up to the pianist in the choir to play enough of the right hymns to get people to do something. I'm glad that that's a work of the Spirit and what a work it is.

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So, we preach the gospel in all of its purity, in all of its power. The inspired authoritative, infallible word of God that is jam-packed with explosive power to break through the most hardened heart and to save sinners. It's for this reason that the Apostle Paul would later write in Romans 1:16, "For I am not ashamed of the gospel for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek."

Well, by now, Jesus' outraged opponents must have been tearing their garments in rage. He has told them that he is God, that he has authority to give life, authority to judge unlike the judges that stood before him, mind you. But Jesus has one final claim to equality with the Father, one that we alluded to earlier, #7, his power to raise the dead. Verse 25, "Truly, truly, I say to you, an hour is coming and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear shall live." This is a curious statement. Notice, an hour is coming and now is. It seems to be a paradox but what he is saying is an hour of a believer's physical resurrection from the dead is coming. It's going to come and when he says "and now is," speaks of the Son's quickening power, our new birth. Again, we were dead in our trespasses and sins, God has made us alive together with Christ. Paul tells us in Ephesians 2 that he has raised us up with him.

And repeatedly, we are going to see this theme throughout John's gospel that Christ gives eternal life to the spiritually dead. Verse 26, "For just as the Father has life in Himself, even so He gave to the Son also to have life in Himself." Jesus is here explaining how he, being a man, is capable of giving life to others both physically and spiritually. How is that? Well, it's because the Father gave his Incarnate Son the same ability that he has within himself, the power to bestow eternal life to those who hear. Those who hear in the truest sense of embracing the truths of the gospel, responding in faith and obedience and repentance because of the life that they have been given, all of which is evidence of genuine saving faith. Jesus said in John 10:27, "My sheep," what? "My sheep hear my voice and I know them and they follow me." The point is: those who are not my sheep will not hear me and I will not savingly know them and they will not follow me.

Jesus goes on, then, in verse 27, "And He gave Him authority," in other words, the Father gave the Son authority, "to execute judgment, because He is the Son of Man." The Son of Man. What an amazing description and this is one that Jesus used of himself. It seems to be his favorite description of himself. This, by the way, was taken from Daniel's great prophecy concerning the Son of Man in Daniel 7. For example, in verse 13 and following we read how the Son of Man he saw coming, "And to Him was given dominion, Glory and a kingdom, That all the peoples, nations and men of every language Might serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion Which will not pass away; And His kingdom is one Which will not be destroyed."

You may remember that the work of redemption required a theanthropon, a God-man. That's why he was born of a virgin. There had to be God and humanity blended together, both the human and the divine natures had to be supernaturally woven together. Jesus had to take upon himself the form of a man in order to be punished for our sin yet he also had to be God in order to endure the sufferings of all of the elect. A perfect man had to die and yet only God is holy and, moreover, the God-man Jesus was the only one that could experience human life with all of its temptations and yet not sin. Therefore, Jesus is the only one qualified to be our Judge because he is the Son of Man, but also the Son of God.

Verse 28, Jesus says, "Do not marvel at this." Now, I wasn't there, you won't either but I would imagine he's looking at them and he's seeing them marveling. They are dumb-founded at all of the

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Jesus' Sevenfold Vindication of His Deity

By David Harrell

Bible Text: John 5:16-29

Preached on: Sunday, March 30, 2014

blasphemy that they are hearing. He's not finished. "Do not marvel at this," he add this, "for an hour is coming, in which all who are in the tombs shall hear His voice." Right now, according to Scripture, we know that the souls of the righteous dead are in heaven with the Lord, 2 Corinthians 5:5-6 and other passages speak of this. We also know that the souls of the unrighteous dead are in unimaginable torment in Hades. Jesus spoke of this, for example, in the story of the rich man and Lazarus in Luke 16. But Jesus goes on to distinguish between two very different resurrections: the resurrection of life for believers and the resurrection of judgment for unbelievers.

Notice at the end of verse 28, "for an hour is coming, in which all who are in the tombs shall hear His voice, and shall come forth; those who did the good deeds," in other words, those who manifested the fruits or evidence of genuine saving faith, it's not that we did good deeds to earn our salvation but because as a result of our salvation, we manifest these good deeds, those are going to come "to a resurrection of life," he says. But, "those who committed the evil deeds to a resurrection of judgment."

Now, as I said earlier in the context of verse 27, here Jesus is specifically speaking of the final resurrection and judgment where he will call forth the unrighteous dead from their graves and he will summon them to the Great White Throne Judgment where they will stand before him at the end of the millennium and hear their sentence. We read about this in Revelation 20. My friends, this is a solemn, horrific scene. At the Great White Throne Judgment myriads upon myriads of unbelievers will be resurrected from their torment and their souls will be reunited with the DNA of their former body, a body that will then be uniquely suited for the torments of eternal hell. In John 5:29, Jesus called this here the resurrection of judgment. In Daniel 12:2, it's described as the resurrection to disgrace and everlasting contempt. In Acts 24:15, Paul described it as the resurrection of the wicked.

What a terrifying scene. This is a reunion of the damned. Summoned by the Son of Man, whom the world has maligned and mocked for millennia. In Revelation 20:13, Jesus reveals more of this to the Apostle John. There we read, "And the sea gave up the dead which were in it and death and Hades gave up the dead which were in them." An amazing thought. The Lord Jesus Christ that the world mocks will summon the bodies of the unbelieving dead from the most remote places of the globe: from the sea where billions have perished, especially in judgment during the time of Noah's flood and millions since then. They will also come from Hades, a term used in the New Testament as a reference to the place of punishment for the departed dead who await their final sentencing to the Lake of Fire at the Great White Throne Judgment. As we look at Scripture, just before the Lord Jesus uncreates the universe, he is going to beckon all the DNA of unbelievers on land and in the sea.

In Revelation, John sees this, he sees the dead, the great and small standing before the throne and then at the end of verse 12 he says, "and books were opened. And another book was opened which is the Book of Life." Daniel saw this as well when he described in Daniel 7, the Ancient of Days who took his seat upon his throne. In verse 10 he said, "And myriads upon myriads were standing before him, the court sat and the books were opened." What a horrifying scene. A scene of an innumerable number who will stand before this dreaded throne and their name will not be found in the Book of Life. Jesus goes on to tell John, in verse 12 of Revelation 20, that "the dead were judged from the things which were written in the books according to their deeds." Verse 14, "And death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire."

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My friends, those of us who know Christ by his grace will experience physical death in time and in space. Unbelievers will experience the same thing. But unlike them, we will not experience the second death. We will not be before the Great White Throne Judgment. They will die yet again at the that Great White Throne when the Son of Man pronounces their sentence, a death that will include unending torment. Verse 15 of that text we read, "And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire."

So, my friends, this concludes Jesus' sevenfold vindication of his deity where he claimed equality with the Father in his providential workings, his perfect oneness of will, his perfect oneness of intimacy, his sovereign authority as life-giver, his judicial authority in judgment, his deserved oneness in honor and in his power to raise the dead. So, this brings us to a final question this morning: what will you do with Jesus? You have heard his testimony from his lips. It has been explained by his servant. It should be very clear who he is. The question is: will you reject him? Or will you worship him? My friend, your answer will determine your destiny. But make no mistake: a day is coming when you will bow the knee and your tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord. The question is: will your confession be the truest and most joyful expression of your heart? Not if you're at the Great White Throne, it won't be. Or will you be forced by a power that you cannot resist to bow your knee and utter this confession from the terrified and tortured lips of rebellion and malice. Something you will do throughout your solitary confinement in the flames of hell.

As a preacher of the gospel, I submit to you the good news: there is hope in Christ. There is grace in Christ. Cry out to him. Believe in him. And he will save you by his grace. And believers, I leave you with this: Christ is our model, Amen? Christ is our model. May we be as bold as he was to declare his deity, to preach his gospel, to worship him as living and holy sacrifices acceptable to God.

Let's pray together.

Father, we humble ourselves having read your word and once again, we find ourselves speechless at the grace that you have lavished upon us. I pray that the great truths that we have contemplated here today will continue to mold us into the image of our dear Savior and I pray that we will be bold to declare who he was and who he is, to a world that does not know him and does not want to know him. And we thank you that because of your power to give life to the spiritually dead, that there are those who will hear and will believe. So Lord, we give you all of the praise and we thank you for this time for it is in Jesus' name that I pray. Amen.

We pray you've been edified by this presentation. You've been listening to Pastor, Bible Teacher and Author, Dr. David Harrell. For more information or for other messages from Dr. Harrell, please visit the Olive Tree Christian Resources website at otcr.org.

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