

**John 5:19-29**  
**How Jesus Should be Honored**  
**(Like Father, Like Son)**

**Overall Purpose:** Arguably, John wrote this Gospel to evangelize unbelieving Jews who were *not* living in the Promised Land.

**Key Focus:** The key focus of John's Gospel concerns the question, *Who is Jesus?*<sup>1</sup> John 5:18 dramatically answers the question of Jesus' true identity:

ESV **John 5:18** . . . he was even calling God his own Father, making himself equal with God.

**Introduction:** Earlier, the Jews of Galilee "welcomed" Jesus because of the wonders he performed, but they did not truly "honor" Him for who He really was: The Son of God.

ESV **John 4:44** Jesus himself had testified that a prophet has no honor in his own hometown.

In today's passage, 5:19-49, Jesus explained why He should be honored "just as" the Father is honored. It comes down to a matter of, "Like Father, Like Son."

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**\*\*\*\*Why should all people honor Jesus "just as" (5:23) they honor God the Father (5:19-24)?** All should honor Jesus because **1)** Jesus only does what He sees the Father doing, **2)** He has authority to grant people life, and because **2)** the Father gave all judgment authority to Jesus. (Point 2 seems to be subset of point 3).

**Key Truth:** To honor Jesus *just as* (5:23) you honor God the Father means that Jesus is God the Son. If Jesus were not God, to honor Jesus just as you honor the Father would be blasphemy.

**Literary Structure:** Prior to John 5, Jesus kept a low profile. However, in chapter 5, he threw down the gauntlet and confronted the Pharisees directly. He first healed a man who had been lame for thirty-eight years, and then in 5:17-18, He flat-out declared Himself to be equal to God. Now, rather than down-play what He said, or try to back-peddle, or clarify that He didn't really mean to say what He said, Jesus doubled down on His claim to equality. Chapters 5-7 record a shift from skepticism over Jesus' claims, to hardened opposition.<sup>2</sup>

—5:19—

**"Them" (5:18): To whom was Jesus speaking? To whom does "them" refer (5:19)?** See 5:18. The pronoun "them" (5:19) refers to the Pharisees who were seeking to kill Him for claiming equality with God (5:18).

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<sup>1</sup> Carson, *John*, 95.

<sup>2</sup> Carson, *John*, 240.

**“Truly, truly” (5:18): Jesus began by saying “truly, truly” (5:19). He said it again in 5:24 and 5:25. What is the significance of saying “truly, truly”?** It was a majestic introductory formula of solemn assurance.<sup>3</sup> It may be compared to a witness to swears to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. Jesus was about to make a number of shocking declarations to these Pharisees. He said “truly, truly” to emphasize that what He was about to say, He really meant. It was like saying, “You may think I’m exaggerating here, but I’m not”, or, “You’re going to have this hard to believe, but it’s true.”

**According to 5:18, Jesus was persecuted, in part for breaking the Pharisees’ interpretation of the Sabbath. In 5:19, how did he defend his actions? Compare 5:17.** I have never seen the Father. You have never seen the Father. The Pharisees had never seen the Father. Yet Jesus claimed to be *so close* to the Father that He could actually “see” what the Father was doing and then do exactly the same thing. Thus, as it relates to what constituted proper Sabbath observance, Jesus was in a position to get it right. Elsewhere Jesus declared:

ESV **Matthew 12:8** . . . the Son of Man is lord of the Sabbath.<sup>4</sup>

**Review: “The” Son (5:19):** Observe that Jesus referred to Himself as “the” Son rather than merely “a” son of God, a clear claim to be the long-awaited Hebrew Messiah (Christ). *Reread 5:17-18.*

—5:20—

**Based on 5:20, why, *oh why*, did the Father show the Son everything He was doing?** It is because the Father loves the Son.

ESV **Matthew 3:16-17** . . . when Jesus was baptized . . . a voice from heaven said, “This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased.”

**The Point:** Jesus was claiming a very special, close relationship with the Father, so much so that Jesus could say:

ESV **John 14:7** If you had known me, you would have known my Father also.

**In 5:20, what did Jesus promise to show the Pharisees in their near future?** He promised to show them even “greater works” than He had already done. He basically said, “You ain’t seen nothing yet!”

**In 5:20, Jesus predicted that they would witness even greater works than “these.” To what does the word “these” refer? See 5:1-8, 2:23.** “These” refers to Jesus’ past works. For example, Jesus had just healed a man who had been lame for thirty-eight years. Prior to that, He had done many miracles at the Passover Feast (2:23). He now declares that He will do even more marvelous works than those.

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<sup>3</sup> Hendriksen, *John*, 198.

<sup>4</sup> It is not that Jesus, as Lord, had authority to break the Sabbath. Rather, Jesus, as Lord, understood the proper application of the Sabbath. The problem is that the Pharisees had applied it incorrectly. Jesus broke their man-made prohibitions. Jesus perfectly fulfilled the Law of Moses.

**Based on 5:20, why did the Father show Jesus even greater works? What was the purpose?** It was “so that” the Pharisees would “marvel”. Jesus went on after this to do many works, even raising the dead.

**Would this coming “marvel” (5:20) be a good thing or a bad thing for the Pharisees?**

Weather it would be good or bad depended on how each man responded to the marvelous works of Jesus. It could lead to some of them being saved, as in:

ESV **John 5:34** . . . I say these things so that you may be saved.

However, for most of them the marvel would be a bad thing. They would reject Jesus and marvel in stunned bewilderment, not amazing grace. For example, during World War Two, on D-Day, the German defenders of the beaches of Normandy marveled when the fog of night lifted and there before them, stretching to the horizon, were the ships of the allied invasion fleet. However, their marvel at the sight was connected with almost certain death.

**Blasphemy of the Holy Spirit:** “The Jews” witnesses marvelous things by Jesus. They were in a unique, never to be repeated, situation. It was their duty to decide, on behalf of the nation, if Jesus were the Messiah or not. They say His miracles, they heard His teachings, they believed He really did do miracles, but then they made the judgment that He was not the Messiah and that the miracles He did, He did in the power of Satan. That is the blasphemy of the Holy Spirit. It is not something that can be committed today.

—5:21—

**Review: What power did Jesus claim to have in 5:21?** Jesus claimed to have the power (and authority) to grant life. The Pharisees rightly believed in life after death, and in the resurrection of the body. They believed God would grant this. Jesus claimed a similar right/power/authority. These are things that only God can do (Jesus is God).

**Since the Father raises those who are dead physically, what type of life does the Son give (5:21)?** Jesus gives spiritual (eternal) life.

**According to 5:21, to whom does Jesus give life?** He gives it to whom He will (it’s all about “he,” not “me”). Granting life is a subset of having the authority to judge.

—5:22-23—

**Why did the Father give all judgment to the Son (5:22-23)?** The Father gave all judgment to the Son “that” (purpose) all may honor the Son “just as” they honor the Father. To honor Jesus *just as* you honor God the Father means that Jesus is God the Son.

**D.A. Carson:** “Either John is supremely deluded and must be dismissed as a fool, or his witness is true and Jesus is to be ascribed the honours due God alone. There is no rational middle ground.”<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Carson, *John*, 255.

**“All” (5:23):** “All” people will eventually honor Jesus. Most of the Pharisees didn’t honor Jesus when they were alive, but they all one day will. Those who do so in this life have eternal life. Everyone who fails to honor Jesus in this life will do so in the next life, on judgment day, but it will be too late then for eternal life:

**ESV Philippians 2:9-11** God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

**According to 5:23b, what is true of anyone who fails to honor Jesus?** He who fails to honor Jesus also fails to honor the Father who sent Him.

**How does 5:22-23 constitute a warning to the Pharisees?** It is a warning that by rejecting Jesus, they were on a collision course with God the Father and under judgment.

**Two Covenant Peoples:** Today there many sincere Jewish people who believe in Jehovah, but if they fail to honor Jesus as God, then the stark reality is that they also ultimately fail to honor the Father who sent Him. It is falsely taught by some that God has two peoples: Israel (His earthly people) and the Church (His heavenly people). The truth is that God only has one people: those who honor Jesus as God.

**Survey:** A George Barna survey concluded that most Americans think there is no such thing as absolute truth and that people of different religions all worship the same God: “We seem intent upon making the God of Israel a generic god.” He further noted, “Two out of three adults believe that it doesn’t matter what god or higher power you pray to, because that universal force will respond regardless.”<sup>6</sup> This does not square with what Jesus claimed in 5:23b.

—5:24—

**“Truly, truly” #2 (5:24):** In 5:24, we have the second “truly, truly” statement. Something very important is about to be uttered.

**“Truly, truly,” who has eternal life (5:24)?** Those who **a)** hear Jesus’ word, and **b)** believe Him who sent Jesus (the Father), have eternal life. Such a one will not face judgment, but has passed from death to life.

**a) What does it mean to “hear” Jesus’ word (5:24)?** Not everyone can hear Jesus’ word. To hear it means you understand and accept His claims and teachings.

**b) It is not enough to hear Jesus’ word. Jesus said that we must also “believe” Him who sent Jesus (5:24). What did the Father say that we must believe?** Through John the Baptist, the Father declared Jesus to be His beloved Son, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.

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<sup>6</sup> “Survey: Different faiths worship same God”, *The Atlanta Journal*, September 7, 1991.

**Eternal Life:** We are to believe that God the Father loves the Son, sent Him into the world, showed Him all things, gave Him the authority to grant life to whomever He wishes, and has given all judgment to the Son. If we believe the Father did this, we will truly honor the Son as equal with God.

**Based on 5:24, who is presently under judgment and still in a state of spiritual death?**

Those who neither hear Jesus word nor believe the Father who sent Him are under judgment and still in a state of death.

ESV **John 3:18** . . . whoever does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God.

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**\*\*\*\*What future event did Jesus want the Pharisees to marvel over (5:25-29)?** They should have marveled that Jesus also has the authority to command the physically dead everywhere to resurrect and be judged—something they rightly believed God the Father had the power and authority to command.

ESV **Daniel 12:2** . . . those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.

**What is the difference between resurrection and reincarnation?** On the face of it, the two words could be used interchangeably. However, enough theological baggage has been attached to each on that they are not interchangeable. Biblical resurrection means the same you will one day be reunited with your same physical human body after death. There is continuity. Reincarnation is associated with Hinduism and means you will be given a new, completely different physical body after death, with no continuity with your present body. Indeed, you might come back as a cow.

—5:25—

**Truly, Truly #3: Jesus began 5:25 with a third “truly, truly” declaration. What was it?** He declared that the dead who hear His voice would live (5:25).

**What time indicator is there in 5:25 to tell us when this would happen?** Jesus said the hour is both “coming” and “now here”. Thus, it was already a present reality when He spoke it and it would continue to be true.

**What type of death and life did Jesus refer to in 5:25?** *Contrast 5:28-29.* Jesus meant spiritual death and spiritual life in 5:25 (the hour is now here), followed by physical death and physical life in the yet future in 5:29 (an hour is coming).

**Coming Attractions (Two Resurrections):** The Scripture teaches that there are two types of resurrection out of the realm of the dead: spiritual and physical. Everyone will experience a physical resurrection, no matter who you are or what you’ve done. That will happen at the end of the age. However, not everyone will experience the spiritual resurrection.

**According to 5:25, who among the spiritually dead will live?** See 5:24. Only those dead who hear His voice will live.<sup>7</sup> Not all the spiritually dead can hear the voice of Jesus. Here on earth, the spiritually alive walk among the walking dead. Most people are alive physically but dead spiritually.

**a)** If you are only born once (your physical birth), then you'll die twice (physically and spiritually):

**ESV Revelation 20:12-15** I saw the dead . . . standing before the throne, and books were opened. Then another book was opened, which is the book of life.\* And the dead were judged by what was written in the books, according to what they had done . . . Then Death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire. And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.

\*The books (plural) are books of works. The problem with works is that the wages of sin is death. This is the judgment that Jesus warned about. The book (singular) is the book of eternal life, which is a gift and can't be earned. Every person's name is in one or the other.

**b)** If you are born twice, you'll only die once. The first birth is your physical birth. The second birth is spiritual, when you are born again:

**ESV John 1:12-13** . . . to all who . . . believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, who were born, not . . . of the flesh . . . but of God.

**ESV John 3:3, 5** . . . unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God . . . unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.

Thus, if you are born twice, then the first and only death you'll experience is physical. The second death has no power over you:

**ESV Revelation 20:6** Blessed and holy is the one who shares in the first resurrection! Over such the second death has no power . . .

**ESV John 11:25-26** Jesus said . . . "Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die."

—5:26—

**Where did Jesus get the authority to grant spiritual life to the spiritually dead (5:26)?** Jesus was given this authority from the Father.

**ESV John 1:4** In him was life, and the life was the light of men.

**Source of Life:** Both the Father and Jesus have life in themselves. No one outside of themselves gave them life. They are self-existent. They are God and giver of all life to others.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> The spiritual resurrection Jesus spoke of in 5:25 seems elsewhere to be called the "first resurrection" (ESV Re 20:6).

<sup>8</sup> Dennis & Grudem, *ESV Study*, 2032.

—5:27—

**Where did Jesus get the authority to execute judgment (5:27)?** He got it from the Father precisely “because” He is the Son of Man.<sup>9</sup> Jesus is the Judge.

**“Son of Man” (5:27):** This is a Messianic title given significance by Daniel 7:13-14.

ESV **Daniel 7:13-14** . . . behold, with the clouds of heaven there came one like a son of man, and he came to the Ancient of Days and was presented before him. And to him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve him; his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom one that shall not be destroyed.

ESV **Acts 17:30-31** God . . . will judge the world in righteousness by a man whom he has appointed; and of this he has given assurance to all by raising him from the dead.

—5:28-29—

**What final truth did Jesus want the Pharisees to marvel at (5:28-29)?** Jesus wanted them to marvel at His claimed to be able to call forth the general resurrection of the dead at the end of time as we know it.

**When Jesus said, “Do not marvel at this” (5:28), to what did “this” refer? Don’t marvel at what?** It evidently refers to Jesus’ claim to have the authority to grant spiritual life. That was quite an amazing claim; an even more marvelous claim was to be able to call forth all the dead from their graves.

**Timing:** Some believe that the righteous will be resurrected 1,000 years before the unrighteous are resurrection. However, 5:28 seems to argue against this (as does Revelation 20:12-15).

**Aside: How could you reconcile 5:29 with the truth that eternal life comes through faith and is not the result of works (see back to 3:16)?** John, in his Gospel, has made it abundantly clear that eternal life is a gift of God’s grace. The rest of the story is that once a person has experienced God’s grace, it changes him; it causes him to do good. Good works are evidence of a saving faith.

**So What?**

**Why did John record this conversation between Jesus and the Pharisees? (What point did he want to make to the unbelieving Jews who originally read this?).** Jesus recorded this incident with the leaders because it shows their growing and irrational opposition to Jesus. John does not want his readers to make the same mistake. Here is the application for everyone:

- 1) Is Jesus right about who He claims to be?
- 2) If He is right, what have you done about it?<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> It sure sounds like it is Jesus who will be sitting on the great white throne of Revelation 20.

<sup>10</sup> Bob Deffinbaugh, “13. Like Father, Like Son (John 5:19-30). Bible.org. Accessed August 02, 2019.



**Based on 5:19-47, what authority did the Father give to Jesus?** The Father gave Jesus the authority to grant spiritual life to whom He wishes, and to judge those who do not believe.

**What attitude should we have toward Jesus, based on 5:19-47?** Jesus is God the Son. True believers will honor Jesus *just as* the honor God the Father.

\*\*\*\* = Ask this question before reading the text. This will engage people's minds and focus their attention.

You can hear this lesson being taught at [SermonAudio.com/NTRF](http://SermonAudio.com/NTRF).

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