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The Authority of the Son
John 5: 16-30

The authority of the Son DIG: What was the result for Jesus healing the invalid in John 5:1-15? How did the way He answered the Jewish leaders only heighten their opposition? Why would Yeshua do that? In what ways is Messiah equal with the Father? What terms are used to demonstrate the relationship between the Two? How does that relate to John 1:1 and 18? What claims does Yeshua make about Himself in verse 24? What is the promise? When does someone start to possess this promise? What happens to those who do hear and believe? To those who do not? What exactly is the offer God is making to humanity?

REFLECT: If you had to explain to someone what verse 24 means in your own words, how would you put? In your own walk with Jesus, when did you come to understand this truth? How did it influence your self-image? Did it change your lifestyle at all? A little? A lot? How much? Did it affect your life goals?

After **Messiah** healed the invalid on **Shabbat** (**to see link click Cs – Jesus Heals a Man at the Pool of Bethesda**), the result was inevitable, **the Jewish leaders began to persecute Him (John 5:16). Their** dispute was no mere squabble among theologians; the issue was one of authority. That healing begged the question, “Who owns **the Sabbath**?” Pharisaic Judaism claimed ownership of **Shabbat** by objecting to **Yeshua doing these things** that **the Oral Law** (see **Ei – The Oral Law**) forbid **on the seventh day**.



There were two specific accusations against **Yeshua**. First, healing the invalid at the pool of Bethesda on **the Sabbath**. **He** began **His defense** by pointing out that **YHVH** had never stopped **working**. **The Lord said to them: My Father is always at His work to this very day (John 5:17a).** Pharisaic Judaism believed that "work" included any kind of activity. According to **Exodus 20:11**, **ADONAI** commanded that the Israelites **not do any work on the seventh day** because **He rested** after the sixth day of creation. This was intended to honor **Elohim's** creation of the world and to remember **His** provision. **The LORD** ceased work because **His** creation was complete, and **Shabbat** is based on the Hebrew verb *to cease.* **He** never, however, stopped providing or protecting! In that sense, **God** never rests from them. The sun rises and sets, the tides ebb and flow, the rain falls, the wind blows, the grass grows on the weekly **Rest Day** as well as on any other. Without **His** continuing acts of grace, all of creation would immediately pass away.

But, **the renegade Rabbi** went far beyond that and asserted **His** absolute equality with **the Father** when **He** said: **And I AM also working (John 5:17b)**. This was an outright claim of ownership of **Shabbat**. Because the Torah came from **ADONAI**, the Torah cannot condemn **God**. **The Son of God** was simply continuing to do what **He**, as **the Creator**, had been doing since **the seventh day**. **He** had done what Abraham, Moses, David, or Dani'el had never dreamed of doing. The point was not lost on **the Jewish leaders**.

Secondly, **making Himself equal with God. For this reason they tried all the more to kill Him; not only was He breaking the Sabbath, but he was even calling God His own Father, making Himself equal with God (Yochanan 5:18).** All the verbs in this verse are imperfect tense, describing continuous action.

This is a good verse to use with cults that deny the deity of **Christ**. The cults use the logic that any son is less than a father, so if **Jesus** were merely **the son**, **He** would be less than **God**. That may be true in Gentile reasoning, but in Judaism (context, context, context), the firstborn was equal to the father! We need to understand the original *sitz im laben* of the first century. Another way the cults deny the deity of **Christ** is to say that **Jesus** never said **He** was **God**. Or never claimed to be **God**. But, **the Jews** in this passage were not so confused about what **He** was saying. Having an equal relationship with **the Father**, what **One** does, the other does. If it is the work of **the Son**, it is also the work of **the Father**. **They** resented **His** challenge to **their** illicit authority and **they** rejected **His** claim of equality with **ADONAI**. So, **they tried all the more to kill Him.**

The real point of contention was this: Who owned the Sabbath? The Lord answered that question with six specific claims. First, the KING of kings said, "I AM equal with God." Yeshua presented the truth of **His** deity in terms no one in **His** day could mistake. **Jesus** began with a double *amen*, meaning *it is true*. **Truly, truly I tell you, the Son can do nothing by Himself.** This does not imply any defect or limitation, it means *the Son cannot act independently of the Father.* Then **He** claimed equality with **God**, calling **Himself the Son of God** and referring to **God** as **His Father**. **He can do only what He sees His Father doing, because whatever the Father does the Son also does (John 5:19).** While **the Father** and **the Son** are distinct persons, **Father** and **Son** are the same **God**. As such, **the Father** and **the Son** are **One**; therefore, these two persons of the Trinity **(John** discusses **the Holy Spirit** later in **16:1-15)** cannot act in opposition to one another. **For the Father loves the Son and shows Him all he does. Yes, and He will show Him even greater works than these, so that you will be amazed (John 5:20). The Son** is the perfect reflection of **the Father** here on earth in human form. Everything **He** does reflects the intentions and actions of **the Father**.[452]

Second, the Bread of Life said, "I AM the giver of life." 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 (Yochanan 5:21). In order to be able to give life, you must be the source of life. No one in the TaNaKh claimed to give life other than **God Himself**. This would be a scandalous claim for any ordinary human. Physicians can prescribe medicine or give treatment in order to postpone death, but they cannot give **life** to **the dead**. **ADONAI** had used the prophets of the TaNaKh to raise **the dead**, but, none dared claim credit for it. Only **God** can create something

out of nothing: **In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth (Gen 1:1).** We never feel so helpless when a loved one dies. We can bring medicine, offer rest, and provide encouragement and consolation. Maybe even some financial support. But, when that person dies all we can do is mourn our loss. Only **God** has the power to restore life.

Third, the Son of God said, "I AM the final Judge." In the TaNaKh the final judgment was reserved for **God the Father**. If now **the Son** is doing the judging, **the Son** has to be **God**. **Moreover, the Father judges no one, but has entrusted all judgment to the Son** (see my commentary on **Revelation Fo – The Great White Throne Judgment**)**,** and the reason for this is **that all may honor the Son just as they honor the Father. Whoever does not honor the Son does not honor the Father, who sent him (John 5:22-23).** Only **Yeshua** can discern the intentions of the heart, because **He** is omniscient. Only **Christ** can weigh the value of a person without pretense, because **He** is perfectly righteous. Only **the Master Builder** can decide our fate, because **He** made us and is sovereign over us. **God the Father** has delegated **all judgment** to **God the Son**, because **the Son** is equal with **the Father**. Thus, **Christ** claimed to deserve the same honor due **the Father**.

Fourth, the Savior of Sinners said, "I will determine the eternal destiny of humanity." Yeshua has the power to provide **eternal life**. In the TaNaKh the One who had the power to provide **eternal life** was reserved for **God** alone. So, if **Jesus** has this power, **He** also must be **God**. **The Lord** once again punctuated **His** statement with a double *amen*. Normally, **the Holy One** called for a belief in **Himself (John 3:16)**; however, in this case **He** called for a belief in **the Father** to reinforce the theme of complete unity of **the Father** and **the Son**. To believe in one is to believe in the other. **Truly, truly I tell you, whoever hears my word and believes Him who sent Me has eternal life** (see **Ms – The Eternal Security of the Believer**) **and will not be judged but has crossed over from death to life (John 5:24).** We will never die, we will merely change our address to the presence of **God**. **Eternal life** can only be a present condition on a **just** basis. To be **justified** means *to be declared righteous*. We are eternally *righteous* because **we have [already] been justified** at the moment we were saved (see **Bw – What God Does for Us at the Moment of Faith**).

Many believers fear the prospect of facing an angry **God**; knowing **He** is holy and we are sinful. They haven't grasped the fact that **we have [already] been justified.** The Greek language makes the concept of our justification very clear.

Because of the precision of the verbs, the language is explicit in describing when something has already been done (past tense), is being done (present tense), will be done (future tense), and is a continuous action (imperfect tense). In **Romans 5:1**, it clearly says **we have [already] been justified** before our **Holy Father** because **Jesus** has **[already]** paid the penalty for our sins, establishing our **peace with God**. The Greek text of **Romans 5:1** starts out with *dikaiothentes*, meaning *having been justified.* The verb is a culminative aorist, passive participle, which emphasizes *the completion of an action*, especially the results that flow from it.[453] **Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we [already] have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ (Romans 5:1).**

When something has **[already] been** done, there is nothing left for you to do. Many believers try desperately to become something they already are. The Bible declares that you cannot do for yourself what has already been done for you by **Christ**. Another way of saying it is that you cannot undo what **Messiah** has already done. Satan's lie is that you must atone for your sin by works of some kind and thus *prove* your love for **God**.[454]

The Roman Catholic Church has developed a doctrine in which all who are not perfect must undergo penal and purifying suffering in an intermediate realm known as purgatory. This doctrine rests on the assumption that while **God** forgives sin, **His** justice nevertheless demands that the sinner must suffer the full punishment that is due before being allowed into heaven. According to the Catholic Church, the fire of purgatory does not differ from the fire of hell, except for duration. It has been said that Catholicism is a religion of fear – fear of the priest, fear of the confessional, fear of the consequences of missing mass, fear of the discipline of penance, fear of death, fear of purgatory, and the fear of the righteous judgment of an angry **God**.[455]

All this fear, however, is unnecessary because **Christ** has **[already]** imputed **His** righteousness to us at faith **(Romans 5:2-19)**. Like a spiritual bank account, **Messiah** has imputed, or transferred all of **His** righteousness to us. And as a result, **we have [already] been justified** by our faith. Consequently, when **ADONAI** looks at us after salvation. **He** doesn't see our sin . . . **He** sees **His Son**.

Fifth, the Miracle-Working Rabbi said, "I will raise the dead." Jesus is the **One** who will bring about the resurrection of the dead. In the TaNaKh, only **God Himself** brought about the resurrection of the dead. So if **Yeshua** can bring about the resurrection of the dead, **He** must be **God**. **Very truly I tell you, a time is coming and has now come when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of**

God (emphasizing **His** deity) **and those who hear will live. For as the Father has life in Himself, so He has granted the Son also to have life in Himself. And He has given Him authority to judge because He is the Son of Man** (emphasizing **His** humanity) **(John 5:25-27). YHVH** validated **Yeshua's** qualification to **judge** all humanity because **He** is both **the Son of God**, who can give life, and **the Son of Man**, who experienced **life** as a human, yet without sin.[456]

A time is coming when everyone **will hear Jesus' voice**. A day when all other voices will be silenced; **His voice** – and **His voice** alone – **will** be heard. **Some will hear His voice** for the first time. It's not that **He** never spoke, it's just that **they** never listened. For **these**, **God's voice** will be **the voice** of a stranger. **They** will **hear** it once – and never **hear** it again. **They** will spend eternity fending off "the voice" **they** followed on earth. But, others will be called from **their** graves by a familiar **voice**. For **they** are sheep who know **their Shepherd**. **They** are servants who opened the door when **the Holy Spirit** knocked. Someday that door will be opened again. Only this time, it won't be **Jesus** who walks into our house; it will be we, who walk into **His**.[457] In **John 5:28-29 the Lord** told **the Jewish leaders: Do not be amazed at this, for a time is coming when all who are in their graves will hear His voice, and come out – those who have done what is good (James 2:14-26) will rise to live** (see my commentary on **Revelation Ff – Blessed and Holy are Those Who Have Part in the First Resurrection**), **and those who have done what is evil will rise to be condemned** (see my commentary on **Revelation Fn – The Second Resurrection**).

Sixth, Yeshua ben David said, "I AM always doing the will of Elohim." In **Messiah's** final claim **He** linked **His** actions on earth to the will of **His Father** in heaven. Now there is a sudden shift in perspective. Throughout **His** confrontation with the Jewish religious leaders, **the Galilean Rabbi** referred to **Himself** in the third person, using titles like **the Son of God** and **the Son of Man**. But, as **He** transitioned to the next phase of the confrontation between **Himself** and **the Jewish leaders** (see **Cu – If You Believed Moses, You Would Believe Me**), **He** restates **His** original claim from **verse 19**, only speaking in the first person: **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 (Yochanan 5:30). His** point was crystal clear, **He** wasn't referring to somebody else; **He** was making claims about **Himself**. This left **His** opponents with no room for compromise, no middle ground on which to stand. And the same goes for us today. We must accept or

reject **His** declaration.

*Dear heavenly **Father**, I thank You for sending **Your One** and only **Son** to pay the price in order that I may be justified. I now accept by faith that I have peace with **You** through my **Lord Jesus Christ**. I renounce the lie that we are enemies and claim the truth that we are friends, reconciled by the death of **Your Son**. I rejoice in the life that I now have in **Messiah** and I look forward to the day when I shall see **You** face-to-face. In **Yeshua's** precious name I pray. Amen.*[458]