

# John 5 Commentary

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THE LIFE OF JESUS AS COVERED  
BY GOSPEL OF JOHN (shaded area)

Click chart to enlarge

## John 5:1 After these things there was a feast of the Jews, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem.

BGT John 5:1 Μετ τατα ν ορτ τ ν ουδαων κα ν βη ησο ς ε ς εροσ λυμα.

KJV John 5:1 After this there was a feast of the Jews; and Jesus went up to Jerusalem.

NET John 5:1 After this there was a Jewish feast, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem.

CSB John 5:1 After this, a Jewish festival took place, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem.

ESV John 5:1 After this there was a feast of the Jews, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem.

NIV John 5:1 Some time later, Jesus went up to Jerusalem for a feast of the Jews.

NLT John 5:1 Afterward Jesus returned to Jerusalem for one of the Jewish holy days.

NRS John 5:1 After this there was a festival of the Jews, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem.

NJB John 5:1 After this there was a Jewish festival, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem.

NAB John 5:1 After this, there was a feast of the Jews, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem.

YLT John 5:1 After these things there was a feast of the Jews, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem,

- Jn 2:13 Ex 23:14-17 Ex 34:23 Lev 23:2-4 De 16:16 Mt 3:15 Ga 4:4
- [John 5 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## JESUS AT A FEAST IN JERUSALEM

A simple outline of this great chapter might be...

1. John 5:1-18 - The Object Lesson - Jesus' Sabbath Healing
2. John 5:19-47 - Jesus' Discourse Based on the Object Lesson

**J Vernon McGee** comments that "Chapter 5 brings us to this very wonderful incident of the healing of the impotent man at the pool of Bethesda. Actually, in a sense, **this miracle is the turning point in the ministry of Christ.** (ED: SEE DIAGRAMS AT TOP OF PAGE) You see, this miracle set the bloodhounds of hate on His track, and they never let up until they put Him to death on the cross (Jn 5:16)." ([John 5 Commentary](#) or BORROW [Gospel of John Volume 1](#)) (Bolding added)

**Bratcher** gives a good summary of John 5 - Chronologically Chapter 5 is connected with Chapter 4 by the words **After this**. Although only this loose chronological connection exists between the two chapters, there is a definite thematic relation. In his dialogue with the Samaritan women Jesus declared that he had the power to give life-giving water; now, by healing the lame man, Jesus reveals his life-giving power (Jn 5:1-9a). This healing takes place on a Sabbath day and so leads to a conflict between Jesus and the Jewish authorities (Jn 5:9b-15). As a result, Jesus affirms his identity with the Father (Jn 5:17-18), and this claim leads to a controversy regarding the Son's authority (Jn 5:19-29). The Jewish authorities will not accept Jesus' own testimony regarding who he is (Jn 5:30-31), so Jesus appeals to other witnesses: to John the Baptist (Jn 5:32-35), to his own mighty works (Jn 5:36), to the Father (Jn 5:37-38), to the Jews' own sacred Scriptures (Jn 5:39), and finally to Moses, who will accuse the Jews before the Father because of their rejection of the Son (Jn 5:45-47). Jesus further indicates that he is not looking for praise from men, but that the Jewish authorities are looking for such praise, and therefore they reject him and his message (Jn 5:41-44). Viewed in its entirety, Chapter 5 revolves around the theme of the life-giving power of the Son, a power which he derives from the Father. ([UBS Handbook - John](#))

**After these things** (Jn 3:22+) - [Expression of time](#). This should always prompt the simple question - What time? In this case it marks sequence of events, the events of John 5 following those in John 3-4. We cannot say much more from the text (some writers think weeks, others months) and so we cannot determine how long the interval was between the events in John 5 and the preceding events in John 3 and John 4. John likes the time phrase **after these things** using it 6x out of a total of 30x in the entire Bible (Jn 3:22+ Jn 5:1, Jn 6:1, Jn 7:1, Jn 19:38, Jn 21:1).

**There was a feast** ([heorte](#)) **of the Jews** ([Ioudaios](#)) **and Jesus went up** (elevation, not direction) **to Jerusalem** - Notice the verb **went up** because Jerusalem is elevated (see diagram above) and men are always described as going "up" (cf Jn 2:13+). John does not tell us which feast. The fact that Jesus went up to Jerusalem (He only went to Jerusalem on feast days) suggests it was one of the 3 feasts Jewish males were required to keep each year - Passover, Pentecost and Tabernacles (Dt. 16:16+; Ex. 23:17+; Ex 34:23+). I noticed three different commentaries favored different feasts. We simply do not know! The identification of the **feast** is not critical (it does not contribute to John's purpose in John 5), for it was simply to provide the setting for the story as any one of these three feasts would have brought Jesus to Jerusalem. Indeed, the important point is not the name of the **feast** but the name of the day of the week, the **Sabbath**, which will become the crucial component as the story unfolds, for it will launch an avalanche of hatred against Jesus which culminates in the Cross!

[David Thompson](#) - Every time Christ goes to Jerusalem, something bad happens, which causes Him to lose favor with the self-righteous religious crowd. When God goes to His own city, He stirs up trouble with those not right with Him. On His first trip, He slammed over furniture in the temple and drove people out. On this trip, He'll heal a man on the Sabbath Day. Christ's goal was not to impress nor become popular with false religious leaders; His goal was to do the will of His Father....Christ could have gone anywhere, but the place He chooses to go is the place of down-and-outers, not the place of the religious or the intellectual, but to the place where the lowly hurting people are. We will be far more effective in a Christlike ministry, when we are reaching out to brokendown sinners, not the self-righteous, religious crowd.

**POSB** - The feast is not named, but it was probably one of the three Feasts of Obligation: the Passover, the Feast of Tabernacles, or Pentecost. These were called Feasts of Obligations because every male Jew who lived within twenty miles of Jerusalem was required by law to attend them. It is significant that Jesus was seen attending the feast. (Borrow [The Preacher's outline & sermon Bible](#))

[Spurgeon's Exposition](#) - For he had respect to the Law. As long as the Law lasted, Christ observed it. Oh, that we were as careful to obey the rules of the Gospel as our Lord was to observe the ritual of the Law! Moreover, he went to Jerusalem because he had an opportunity of addressing great numbers of people there. While I have been resting at Menton, I have been very glad to be of service to a few friends who were either seeking the Saviour, or needing some guidance in their spiritual life; but I cannot tell you how happy I am to be once more in the Tabernacle, preaching to the great congregation. Fisherman like to cast their nets where there are plenty of fish; and fishers of men delight to be where there are many men who may be enclosed in the gospel net. "After this there was a feast of the Jews; and Jesus went up to Jerusalem."

**Vine** comments on the Jewish practices to keep the feasts were for the most part empty "religious functions being observed with punctilious exactitude, as if all was right with God. Yet their ways were not His ways, nor their thoughts His thoughts."

FESTIVALS OF THE JEWS MENTIONED IN JOHN	
Passover	John 2:13, 23
Unnamed	John 5:1
Passover	John 6:4
Feast of Booths	John 7:2
Feast of Dedication	John 10:22
Passover	John 12:1 thru John 19

**TECHNICAL NOTES:**

**NET NOTE** on a **feast** - The textual variants  $\alpha\pi\tau\eta$  or  $\alpha\pi\tau\eta$  (heortē or hē heortē, "a feast" or "the feast") may not appear significant at first, but to read  $\alpha\pi\tau\eta$  with the article would almost certainly demand a reference to the Jewish Passover. The article is found in  $\kappa$  C L  $\Delta$   $\Psi$  f1 33 892 1424 pm, but is lacking in { 66, 75 A B D T Ws  $\Theta$  f13 565 579 700 1241 pm}. Overall, the shorter reading has

somewhat better support. Internally, the known proclivity of scribes to make the text more explicit argues compellingly for the shorter reading. Thus, the verse refers to a feast other than the Passover. The incidental note in John 5:3, that the sick were lying outside in the porticoes of the pool, makes Passover an unlikely time because it fell toward the end of winter and the weather would not have been warm. L. Morris (John (BORROW [The Gospel according to John](#), 299, n. 6) thinks it impossible to identify the feast with certainty.

**NET NOTE** - A Jewish feast. Jews were obligated to go up to Jerusalem for 3 major annual feasts: Passover, Pentecost, and Tabernacles. If the first is probably ruled out because of the time of year, the last is not as likely because it forms the central setting for chap. 7 (where there are many indications in the context that Tabernacles is the feast in view.) This leaves the feast of Pentecost, which at some point prior to this time in Jewish tradition (as reflected in Jewish intertestamental literature and later post-Christian rabbinic writings) became identified with the giving of the law to Moses on Mount Sinai. Such an association might explain Jesus' reference to Moses in Jn 5:45–46. This is uncertain, however. The only really important fact for the author is that the healing was done on a **Sabbath**. This is what provoked the controversy with the Jewish authorities recorded in Jn 5:16–47.

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**Jews** (2453) [loudaios](#) ultimately derived from Hebrew Yehudi = a member of the tribe of Judah) is an adjective refers to one who belongs to the Jewish race with focus on adherence to Mosaic tradition (Acts 10:28, 22:3, 21:39). A Jew in respect to race or religion (as opposed to Gentiles). In the plural, it means the Jews, the people of ancient Palestine. In John's Gospel loudaios was used of those hostile to Jesus, especially the Jewish leaders (Jn 2:18, 5:16ff, 6:41, 7:1, 10:31ff, 19:7). Jesus is referred to as **King of the Jews** (Mt 2:2, Mt 27:11, Mk 15:2, Lk 23:3, Jn 18:33). Jews hated the Samaritans (Jn 4:9) and the missionary activity of Paul (Acts 9:23, 13:45, 14:19, 20:3, 21:27, 23:12, 25:7).

Depending on the context, the identity of the designation "**Jews**" can refer to

1. the entire Jewish people,
2. the residents of Jerusalem and surrounding territory,
3. the authorities in Jerusalem,
4. merely those who were hostile to Jesus. Here the author refers to the Jewish authorities or leaders in Jerusalem.

(R. G. Bratcher, "The Jews' in the Gospel of John" BT 26 [1975]: 401–9).

**Colin Kruse - 'The Jews' in the Gospel of John** - There are many references to 'the Jews' in the Gospel of John, and these must be interpreted with great care lest it be assumed that the Jews were always the enemies of Jesus, so adding fuel to the fires of anti-Semitism. The Greek word loudaios ('Jew') is found seventy times in sixty-six verses in the Gospel of John. The NIV renders loudaios mostly as 'the Jews/Jews' (twenty-seven times), 'the Jewish leaders/ opponents/officials' (sixteen times), simply 'they' (six times) and 'we' (once), besides many particular expressions, such as 'king of the Jews'. By rendering loudaios frequently as 'the Jewish leaders', the translators of the NIV sought to distinguish the actions and attitudes of most of the Jewish leaders, who were often antagonistic towards Jesus, from the Jews in general, who were not all, and not always, antagonistic towards him. The majority of negative references to the Jews in the Gospel of John refer to the Jewish leaders who were antagonistic towards Jesus. This is balanced by a number of references to Jews, and even to some of their leaders, who believed in Jesus. Jesus' disciples, of course, were Jews, and Jesus himself insisted that 'salvation is of the Jews'. Nowhere does the evangelist imply that all Jews were antagonistic towards Jesus. It is important to recognize that not all criticisms of things Jewish are anti-Semitic. There is a long tradition of internal self-criticism among Jewish people, that is, intra-Jewish polemic (e.g. the prophets of the OT criticized their own people when they forsook the covenant). There are also criticisms of Jewish religion which are not anti-Semitic, any more than criticism of Hinduism is anti-Indian. Only criticisms of the Jewish race can properly be called anti-Semitic. It is therefore unjustified to brand the fourth evangelist as anti-Semitic. He was a Jew writing primarily for Jews. The way he writes the story of Jesus may reflect tensions between believing and unbelieving Jews, between those who followed Jesus Messiah and those who remained committed to Pharisaic tradition. In that case, what is reflected in the Gospel of John is not anti-Semitic, but intra-Jewish tension. However, the Gospel of John was not written to criticize Jews, but to commend Jesus as the Messiah to them. Its negative references to the Jews must never be taken to refer to all Jews in Jesus' day, and even less so to all Jews of all times. (Borrow [The Gospel according to John : an introduction and commentary](#) - see page 48)

**Feast** (1859) [heorte](#) means feast, feast day, festival, holy day. In the NT heorte always denotes Jewish feasts or pilgrimage festivals (Passover = Lk 2:41, Feast of Unleavened Bread = Lk 22:1, Feast of Tabernacles = Jn 7:2). **Mounce** - Jesus and His disciples celebrated the feasts (Jn 2:23; 5:1; 7:10, 14). More than half of the occurrences of heortē are found in John (Jn 12:12; 13:1), where

the beloved disciple demonstrates that the **OT feasts find their true significance in Christ** (Jn 7:37). There is only one usage of *heortē* outside of the gospels (Col 2:16). Here Paul teaches that believers are free to eat, drink, and celebrate feast days without condemnation. But they must always remember that these feasts are “a shadow of the things that were to come” and that Christ fulfilled these feasts ([Col 2:17](#)). (Mounce’s Complete Expository Dictionary of Old & New Testament Words)

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## James Smith - Handfuls of Purpose - THE IMPOTENT MAN JOHN 5:1–15

“The Blessed One— He read the tear-stained book of poor men’s souls.”—Kingsley.

This pool called Bethesda, “House of Mercy,” seems to have been the Jerusalem hospital. The fourth verse is left out of the text in the Revised Version. The water was evidently subject to intermittent bubbling, and perhaps possessed many healing virtues. But it is not with those who went into the pool that we have to do, but with the man who did not get in, and yet was healed. Observe his—

**I. Sorrowful Condition.** “He had an infirmity thirty and eight years” (John 5:5). This infirmity was probably the result of his sin (v. 14). Like sin itself, it was an old-standing disease. As far as his own ability, or any mere human power was concerned, he was past hope. This house of mercy was his last shift. The mercy of God is the sinners’ only hope.

**II. Humble Position.** This “certain man was there.” Where? There—among the “blind, halt, withered, waiting.” He was not ashamed to take his place among the helpless and the needy. If he had refused to take this self-humbling step he never would have been healed. Pride and shame keep many a one away from the saving touch of Christ. To many God is still saying, “How long will ye refuse to humble yourselves?” It was when the wretched publican took his place as a sinner that he was justified (Luke 18:13).

**III. Fruitless Effort.** “While I am coming, another steps down before me” (John 5:7). He had taken his place among the “impotent folk.” Now he is doing the best he can; but his best only ends in failure and disappointment. There are a great many “others,” seen and unseen, within and without, that are ready to step down before a soul seeking salvation. This the broken law of God is sure to do. Salvation is not of works, lest any man should boast. His repeated failure makes him more prepared for the saving grace of Jesus Christ.

**IV. Merciful Deliverer.** “When Jesus saw him lie, and knew ... He saith unto him, Wilt thou be made whole?” (John 5:6). He knoweth the path of those whose spirits have become overwhelmed (Ps 142:3). This poor man was waiting for a more convenient season, but that was not what he needed. He needed one to save him where he was, and as he was, and that Christ offered to do. Wilt thou be made whole, where you are, just now? When he answered, “Sir, I have no man,” etc., it was clear that he did not know to whom he was speaking, for those who are saved by Christ need no other man. Wilt thou that I should make thee whole?

**V. Personal Call.** “Rise, take up thy bed and walk” (John 5:8). This call must surely have come to him with startling suddenness. He had not walked for “thirty and eight years.” But there is always that inexplicable something about the Person and Word of the Lord Jesus Christ that awakens the confident expectation of the diseased and the downcast. It was utterly useless for any other man to say, “Rise and walk.” It would only be solemn mockery, but coming from His lips the words were “spirit and life.”

**VI. Sudden Change.** “And immediately the man was made whole” (John 5:9). He believed the word of the Lord, acted on the authority of it, and found in his happy experience that he had received the blessing for which he so much longed. He got it, not by working, striving, or struggling, but by simply believing. The change wrought in him was both sudden and complete: “immediately ... made whole.” The cure itself was a mystery, but the fact of it was a certainty—perfect and God-like.

**VII. Fearless Testimony.** “The man departed, and told the Jews that it was Jesus which had made him whole” (John 5:15). Having met the Lord in the temple (John 5:14), he now confesses Him before men, and before such men as were bitterly opposed to Him. “With the heart man believeth, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation” (Rom. 10:10). By grace are we saved through faith, but faith is manifested before men by works (James 2:18). Some refuse to confess Christ because they love the praise of men more than the praise of God (John 12:42, 43). To deny Him before men is to be denied by Him before the Father in Heaven (Matt. 10:32, 33). (ED: THERE IS NO EVIDENCE IN THIS TEXT THAT THE MAN WAS SPIRITUALLY HEALED!)

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## Warren Wiersbe - JOHN 5

**Works (Jn 5:1–21).** The Father “broke” His Sabbath rest to help two sinners (Gen. 3:8ff.), and Jesus followed His example. In the world of nature, the Father is healing bodies, multiplying food, turning water into wine, and so forth; but He takes longer to do those things. Our Lord’s miracles are the Father’s works done instantly. Whether instantly or gradually, they are wonderful works of God.

**Wrath (Jn 5:22, 24–30).** Today, Jesus is the Savior; tomorrow, He will be the Judge (Rev. 20:11–15). Even death cannot keep lost sinners from the judgment, for He will raise them from the dead. There is no escape, except faith in Jesus Christ (Jn 5:24).

**Worship (Jn 5:23).** If you worship God the Father, you must also worship the Son; and if you dishonor the Son, you dishonor the

Father. Those who claim to worship God but ignore the Son are not even worshipping God! They are only fooling themselves.

**Witness (Jn 5:31–47).** How can anyone deny that Jesus is the Son of God when so many witnesses affirm that He is: John the Baptist (Jn 5:31–35), the miracles (Jn 5:36), the Father (Jn 5:37; Mark 1:11), and the Scriptures (Jn 5:38–39)? But when people believe on Him, they have the witness within themselves (Jn 5:39–47; 1 John 5:9–13). (Borrow [With the Word](#))

**John 5:2 Now there is in Jerusalem by the sheep gate a pool, which is called in Hebrew Bethesda, having five porticoes.**

KJV John 5:2 Now there is at Jerusalem by the sheep market a pool, which is called in the Hebrew tongue Bethesda, having five porches.

NET John 5:2 Now there is in Jerusalem by the Sheep Gate a pool called Bethzatha in Aramaic, which has five covered walkways.

CSB John 5:2 By the Sheep Gate in Jerusalem there is a pool, called Bethesda in Hebrew, which has five colonnades.

ESV John 5:2 Now there is in Jerusalem by the Sheep Gate a pool, in Aramaic called Bethesda, which has five roofed colonnades.

NIV John 5:2 Now there is in Jerusalem near the Sheep Gate a pool, which in Aramaic is called Bethesda and which is surrounded by five covered colonnades.

NLT John 5:2 Inside the city, near the Sheep Gate, was the pool of Bethesda, with five covered porches.

NRS John 5:2 Now in Jerusalem by the Sheep Gate there is a pool, called in Hebrew Beth-zatha, which has five porticoes.

NJB John 5:2 Now in Jerusalem next to the Sheep Pool there is a pool called Bethesda in Hebrew, which has five porticos;

NAB John 5:2 Now there is in Jerusalem at the Sheep (Gate) a pool called in Hebrew Bethesda, with five porticoes.

YLT John 5:2 and there is in Jerusalem by the sheep -gate a pool that is called in Hebrew Bethesda, having five porches,

- **gate**, Ne 3:1 12:39
- **pool**: Isa 22:9,11
- [John 5 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

[Archaeological Proof - Pool of Bethesda](#)  
[WATCH THE FAITHLIFE SHORT VIDEO](#)

## THE POOL AT BETHESDA

**Now there is in Jerusalem by the sheep gate a pool** ([kolumbethra](#)), **which is called in Hebrew Bethesda** ("[house of mercy](#)"), **having five porticoes** (stoa) - In the model above, note the columns which are synonymous with porticoes or porches (see [picture of a colonnade](#)). [The pool has been discovered and excavated](#) and measures 95 meters or 315 feet in length with a central partition dividing it into two sections. On the partition and on the four sides there are colonnades (porticoes), that represent the five porches John describes.

**THOUGHT** - Do you still not believe the Word of God is really the Word of God? Here in John 5 we encounter another [archaeological find](#) which underscores the absolute veracity ([verbal plenary inspiration](#)) of the Word. And Jesus is the Word! Believe in Him and be saved forever. Amen. As Ripley said "[Believe it \(in Him\) or not](#)" but in this case both beliefs have eternal consequences!

**Jon Courson on sheep gate** - The very location speaks of Judaism, of the law, of men's traditions—for it was through the sheep gate that sacrifices were brought into the city of Jerusalem. (See [Jon Courson's Application Commentary](#) - scroll up and down to show more text)

[Spurgeon's Exposition](#) - This pool of Bethesda was rightly called "the house of mercy"; but it might have just as truly named "the



house of misery": for its "five porches" were the abode of many who were in misery, and who needed mercy.

**NET NOTE** - The pool had five porticoes. These were covered walkways formed by rows of columns supporting a roof and open on the side facing the pool. People could stand, sit, or walk on these colonnaded porches, protected from the weather and the heat of the sun.

**Kostenberger** on **sheep gate** has an interesting comment - In Jesus' day, this apparently was a small opening in the north wall of the temple. The sheep were washed in the pool before being taken to the sanctuary. This was also the place where invalids lay in hopes of being healed. The upper class and those wishing to be ritually pure would have avoided this area, but not Jesus.

#### Related Resources:

- Borrow [The Jerusalem Jesus knew : an archaeological guide to the Gospels](#) - Pool of Bethesda on page 60
- Borrow [The rediscovery of Bethesda, John 5:2](#) by Joachim Jeremias
- See Wikipedia - [Pool of Bethesda](#)

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**Pool** (2861)(**kolumbethra** from **kolumbao** = plunge into the sea) describes a place for swimming, a pool, a pond. It denotes a relatively large construction for containing water 'pool' (primarily used for bathing). It means a deep pool from underneath that comes bubbling (which does raise the possibility that the intermittent stirring of the pool was actually the effect of an underground spring occasionally erupting). Most uses are John 5 describes a "healing pool," with the one other use in Jn 9:7 referring to the "[Pool of Siloam](#)."

**Gilbrant** - By derivation **kolumbēthra** denotes "a place for swimming" (see **kolumbaō** = to swim). In classical Greek the primary function of such a "swimming place" was for bathing. All the Biblical usages, however, refer to artificial "reservoirs" for storing water, particularly against times of drought or siege. Except for Ecclesiastes 2:6 and Nahum 2:8 (LXX 2:9) these were various pools in and around the city of Jerusalem (cf. 2 Kings 18:17 [LXX 4 Kings 18:17]; Nehemiah 2:14; 3:15,16; Isaiah 7:3; 22:9,11; 36:2). In the New Testament the word occurs only in John's Gospel. John used it in recounting two of Jesus' miracles—the healing of the lame man (5:2,4,7) and the healing of the man born blind (9:7,11). The first happened at a pool called "Bethesda," which was by the "sheep market" and was connected with an intermittent water source. The second, "Siloam," was where the man born blind washed his eyes to receive sight after Jesus smeared a mixture of clay and saliva on them." ([Complete Biblical Library](#))

**Kolumbethra** - 4v - Jn. 5:2; Jn. 5:4; Jn. 5:7; Jn. 9:7 - all translated pool.

**Kolumbethra** in the **Septuagint** - 2 Ki. 18:17; Neh. 2:14; Neh. 3:15; Neh. 3:16; Eccl. 2:6; Isa. 7:3; Isa. 22:9; Isa. 22:11; Isa. 36:2; Nah. 2:8; Jn. 5:2; Jn. 5:7; Jn. 9:7

**Porticoes** (colonnade)(4745)(stoa) a pillar, column, roofed colonnade (an open space surrounded and supported by columns), porch, cloister. A roofed colonnade open normally on one side where people could stand, sit, or walk there and be protected from the weather and the heat of the sun. **Thayer** on **stoa** - "a portico, a covered colonnade where people can stand or walk protected from the weather and the heat of the sun.... a porch or portico built by Solomon in the eastern part of the temple (which in the temple's destruction by the Babylonians was left uninjured, and remained down to the times of king Agrippa, to whom the care of the temple was entrusted by the emperor Claudius, and who on account of its antiquity did not dare to demolish and build it anew; so Josephus relates, Antiquities 20, 9, 7." Compare Stoics (Acts 17:18), "philosophers of the porch."

**Gilbrant** - The most familiar stoa in the New Testament was Solomon's Porch, a roofed colonnade on the east side of the temple in Jerusalem. Left intact by the Babylonians when they razed the temple, it was incorporated into Herod's rebuilt temple which existed in the time of Jesus. It was here that Jesus debated with the Jews concerning His sonship (John 10:23ff.) and Peter and John healed the lame man (Acts 3:11). The only other stoa mentioned in the New Testament was at the Pool of Bethesda in Jerusalem. According to John's description it was surrounded by five "porches" (John 5:2), which has been verified in recent archaeological excavations near St. Stephen's Gate and the Church of St. Anne ([Complete Biblical Library](#)).

**Wikipedia on Colonnade** - In [classical architecture](#), a **colonnade** is a long sequence of [columns](#) joined by their [entablature](#), often free-standing, or part of a building.<sup>[1]</sup> Paired or multiple pairs of columns are normally employed in a colonnade which can be straight or curved. The space enclosed may be covered or open. In [St. Peter's Square](#) in Rome, [Bernini's](#) great colonnade encloses a vast open elliptical space. When in front of a building, screening the door (Latin *porta*), it is called a [portico](#). When enclosing an open court, a [peristyle](#). A portico may be more than one rank of columns deep, as at the [Pantheon](#) in Rome or the [stoa](#) of [Ancient Greece](#).

**Bethesda - ISBE - BETHESDA** - be-thez'-da (Bethesda; Textus Receptus of the New Testament, Jn 5:2 (probably beth chicda', "house of mercy"); other forms occur as Bethzatha and Bethsaida): The only data we have is the statement in Jn 5:2-4: "Now there is in Jerusalem by the sheep gate a pool, which is called in Hebrew Bethesda, having five porches. In these lay a multitude of them that were sick, blind, halt, withered." Many ancient authorities add (as in the Revised Version, margin) "waiting for the moving of the water: for an angel of the Lord went down at certain seasons into the pool, and troubled the water," etc. The name does not help as to the site, no such name occurs elsewhere in Jerusalem; the mention of the sheep gate is of little assistance because the word "gate" is supplied, and even were it there, its site is uncertain. Sheep "pool" or "place" is at least as probable; the tradition about the "troubling of the water" (which may be true even if the angelic visitant may be of the nature of folk-lore) can receive no rational explanation except by the well-known phenomenon, by no means uncommon in Syria and always considered the work of a supernatural being, of an intermittent spring. The arrangement of the five porches is similar to that demonstrated by Dr. F. Bliss as having existed in Roman times as the Pool of Siloam; the story implies that the incident occurred outside the city walls, as to carry a bed on the Sabbath would not have been forbidden by Jewish traditional law.

**Bethesda - Wikipedia** - The name of the pool is said to be derived from the [Hebrew](#) and/or [Aramaic language](#). *Beth hesda* (בֵּית חֶסְדָּה/חֶסֶד), means either *house of mercy*<sup>[1]</sup> or *house of grace*. This meaning may have been thought appropriate, since the location was seen as a place of disgrace due to the presence of invalids, and as a place of grace due to the granting of healing.<sup>[2][3][4][5]</sup> Alternative renderings to the name Βηθεσδα (Bethesda),<sup>[6]</sup> appearing in manuscripts of the Gospel of John, include Βηθζαθα<sup>[7]</sup> (*Beth-zatha* = <sup>8</sup>בֵּית חֶדְתָּא), a derivative of [Bezetha](#), and *Bethsaida* (not to be confused with [Bethsaida](#), a town in [Galilee](#)), although the latter is considered to be a [metathetical](#) corruption by Biblical scholars.<sup>[9]</sup>....The **Pool of Bethesda** is a [pool](#) in [Jerusalem](#) known from the New Testament account of [Jesus miraculously healing a paralysed man \(AT BETHSEDA\)](#), from the fifth chapter of the Gospel of John, where it is described as being near the Sheep Gate, surrounded by five covered colonnades or porticoes. It is now associated with the site of a pool in the current [Muslim Quarter](#) of the city, near the gate now called the [Lions' Gate](#) or St. Stephen's Gate and the [Church of St. Anne](#), that was excavated in the late 19th century....

**ESV Study note on pool at Bethesda** - there remains strong reason to identify this pool with a single large two-pool complex near the Sheep Gate in Jerusalem and adjacent to the modern Church of St. Anne. The two pools are separated from each other by a partition. The remains of columns found around this site help confirm that the partition between the pools, along with each of the four sides surrounding the pool complex, likely contained the five roofed colonnades (i.e., five stoas, which are covered walkways; a "colonnade" is a row of columns). A fifth-century Byzantine basilica was built over this site. ([ESV Study Bible borrow](#))

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## TECHNICAL NOTES ON JOHN 5:2

**NET NOTE** - Regarding the use of the present tense σιν (estin) and its implications for the dating of the Gospel of John, see the article by D. B. Wallace, "John 5, 2 and the Date of the Fourth Gospel," *Bib* 71 (1990): 177–205. See Dan Wallace's related article [John 5:2 and the Date of the Fourth Gospel ... again](#)

**NET NOTE** - The site of the miracle is also something of a problem: προβατικ (probatikē) is usually taken as a reference to the Sheep Gate near the temple. Some (R. E. Brown and others) would place the word κολυμβήθρα (kolumbēthra) with προβατικ to read "in Jerusalem, by the Sheep Pool, there is (another pool) with the Hebrew name." This would imply that there is reference to two pools in the context rather than only one. This does not seem necessary (although it is a grammatical possibility). The gender of the words does not help since both are feminine (as is the participle πιλεγομένη [epilegomenē]). Note however that Brown's suggestion would require a feminine word to be supplied (for the participle πιλεγομένη to modify). The traditional understanding of the phrase as a reference to the Sheep Gate near the temple appears more probably correct.

**NET NOTE on Bethesda** - Some MSS (κ [L] 33 it) read Bethzatha, while others read Bethsaida ( [66],75 B T Ws [Ψ] pc vg); codex D has Belzetha. A lot of controversy has surrounded the name of the pool itself: The reading of the Byzantine (or majority) text (A C Θ 078 f1, 13 ), Bethesda, has been virtually discarded by scholars in favor of what is thought to be the more primitive Bethzatha, even though many recent translations continue to employ Bethesda, the traditional reading. The latter is attested by Josephus as the name of a quarter of the city near the northeast corner of the temple area. He reports that the Syrian Legate Cestius burned this suburb in his attack on Jerusalem in October A.D. 68 (J. W. 2.19.4 [2.530]). However, there is some new archaeological evidence for this problem. 3Q15 (Copper Scroll) from Qumran seems to indicate that in the general area of the temple, on the eastern hill of Jerusalem, a treasure was buried in Bet' Esdatayin, in the pool at the entrance to the smaller basin. The name of the region or pool itself seems then to have been Bet' Esda, "house of the flowing." It appears with the dual ending in the scroll because there were two basins. Bethesda seems to be an accurate Greek rendition of the name, while J. T. Milik suggests Bethzatha is a rendition of the



Aramaic intensive plural Bet' Esdata (DJDJ 3, 271). As for the text of John 5:2, the fundamental problems with the Bethesda reading are that it looks motivated (with an edifying Semitic etymology, meaning "House of Mercy" [TCGNT 178]), and is minimally attested. Apart from the Copper Scroll, the evidence for Bethesda is almost entirely shut up to the Byzantine text (C being the most notable exception, but it often has Byzantine encroachments). On the one hand, this argues the Byzantine reading here had ancient, semitic roots; on the other hand, since both readings are attested as historically accurate, a decision has to be based on the better witnesses. The fact that there are multiple readings here suggests that the original was not well understood. Which reading best explains the rise of the others? It seems that Bethzatha is the best choice.

**NET NOTE** - On the location of the pool called Bethzatha, the double-pool of St. Anne is the probable site, and has been excavated; the pools were trapezoidal in shape, 165 ft (49.5 m) wide at one end, 220 ft (66 m) wide at the other, and 315 ft (94.5 m) long, divided by a central partition. There were colonnades (rows of columns) on all 4 sides and on the partition, thus forming the five covered walkways mentioned in John 5:2. Stairways at the corners permitted descent to the pool.

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#### **QUESTION** - [What happened at the Pool of Bethesda?](#)

**ANSWER** - The Pool of Bethesda was "in Jerusalem near the Sheep Gate" (John 5:2), which places it north of the temple, near Fort Antonia. John gives the additional detail that the pool was "surrounded by five covered colonnades." During Jesus' time, the Pool of Bethesda lay outside the city walls. It was at this pool that Jesus performed a miracle showing that He is greater than any human malady and that superstition and religious folklore are foolish and feeble substitutes for faith in God.

The Pool of Bethesda was used in ancient times to provide water for the temple. The mention of the "Upper Pool" in 2 Kings 18:17 may be a reference to the Pool of Bethesda. Sometime during the [Hasmonean Period](#), an additional pool was added to the original one.

The name of the pool, "Bethesda," is Aramaic. It means "House of Mercy." John tells us that "a great number of disabled people used to lie [there]—the blind, the lame, the paralyzed" (John 5:3). The covered colonnades would have provided shade for the disabled who gathered there, but there was another reason for the popularity of the Pool of Bethesda. Legend had it that an angel would come down into the pool and "stir up the water." The first person into the pool after the stirring of the water "was made well from whatever disease with which he was afflicted" (John 5:4, NAS). The Bible does not teach that this actually happened—John 5:4 is not included in most modern translations because it is unlikely to be original to the text—rather, the superstitious belief probably arose because of the pool's association with the nearby temple.

On the day that Jesus visited the Pool of Bethesda, there was a man there who "had been an invalid for thirty-eight years" (John 5:5). Jesus asked the man if he wanted to be healed. The man replied, "I have no one to help me into the pool when the water is stirred. While I am trying to get in, someone else goes down ahead of me" (verse 7). Obviously, the man believed the urban legend about the stirring of the water. He blamed the fact that he was never healed on his tardiness in getting into the water.

Jesus swept aside all superstition and bypassed altogether the need for magic water with one command: "Get up! Pick up your mat and walk" (John 5:8). The man was instantly cured, and "he picked up his mat and walked" (verse 9). The man did not need quicker reflexes or beneficent angels or enchanted water. The man needed Jesus.

Amazingly, not everyone was happy about the man's miraculous healing. The day Jesus healed the man at the poolside happened to be a Sabbath. As the man left Bethesda, the Jewish leaders saw him carrying his mat, and they stopped him: "It is the Sabbath," they said. "The law forbids you to carry your mat" (John 5:10). The man told them that he was simply obeying orders: "The man who made me well said to me, 'Pick up your mat and walk'" (verse 11). The Jews inquired who would so brazenly promote Law-breaking, but "the man who was healed had no idea who it was, for Jesus had slipped away into the crowd" (verse 13).

The reaction of the Jewish leaders shows that, no matter how much proof God provides, there will be some people who refuse to see the truth. Jesus was a bona fide Miracle Worker, but the religious leaders couldn't see the miracle. All they could see was that someone had violated a rule. The issue was not the breaking of God's command, for Jesus fulfilled the Law and was completely subject to it (Matthew 5:17). The only thing being broken was a pharisaical *interpretation* of one of God's laws. So, a blessing meant to increase faith only increased the blindness of those who refused to acknowledge the blessing.

The postscript to the story reveals that the man who was *physically* healed still needed some *spiritual* healing. "Later Jesus found him at the temple and said to him, 'See, you are well again. Stop sinning or something worse may happen to you'" (John 5:14). Jesus' words are a rebuke of an unnamed sin—the man was living contrary to God's will somehow—and a warning of "something worse." What could be worse than thirty-eight years of paralysis? How about an eternity in hell (see Mark 9:47)?

Now that the man knew who Jesus was, he returned to the Jewish leaders and told them "it was Jesus who had made him well" (John 5:15). It is likely that the man did this in praise of Jesus, to magnify the glory due His name, and also from a sense of

obligation—he had been asked a question and felt he should respond with the answer, once he had it. Little did he anticipate the reaction the leaders would have: “So, because Jesus was doing these things on the Sabbath, the Jewish leaders began to persecute him” (verse 16).

The Pool of Bethesda was the focus of a local legend about healing, but Jesus showed that faith in legends and superstition is misplaced. In contrast, faith in Jesus Christ—the One who can heal with a simple word, the Savior who can forgive any sin, the true Master of the “House of Mercy”—is never misplaced. [GotQuestions.org](http://GotQuestions.org)

**John 5:3 In these lay a multitude of those who were sick, blind, lame, and withered, [waiting for the moving of the waters]**

BGT John 5:3 ν τα ταις κατ κειτο πλθος τ ν σθενο ντων, τυφλ ν, χωλ ν, ξηρ ν.

KJV John 5:3 In these lay a great multitude of impotent folk, of blind, halt, withered, ***waiting for the moving of the water.***

NET John 5:3 A great number of sick, blind, lame, and paralyzed people were lying in these walkways.

CSB John 5:3 Within these lay a large number of the sick-- blind, lame, and paralyzed [-- ***waiting for the moving of the water,***

ESV John 5:3 In these lay a multitude of invalids-- blind, lame, and paralyzed.

NIV John 5:3 Here a great number of disabled people used to lie--the blind, the lame, the paralyzed.

NLT John 5:3 Crowds of sick people-- blind, lame, or paralyzed-- lay on the porches.

NRS John 5:3 In these lay many invalids-- blind, lame, and paralyzed.

- **of blind:** Mt 15:30 Lu 7:22
- **withered:** 1Ki 13:4 Zec 11:17 Mk 3:1-4
- **waiting:** Pr 8:34 La 3:26 Ro 8:25 Jas 5:7
- [John 5 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## **A CROWDED POOL OF PATHETIC SOULS**

**In these lay a multitude** ("great multitude" - plethos) **of those who were sick** ([astheneo](#)), **blind** ([tuphlos](#)), **lame** ([cholos](#)), **and withered** ([xeros](#)) - **In these** refers to the 5 porticoes (or porches) on which sick were strewn out hoping for a healing. This was a sad, pathetic sight of a great multitude of sick humanity waiting and hoping for an opportunity to be healed. It should not be surprising that many writers (see Spurgeon below) apply these literal pictures (sick, blind, etc) to the spiritual condition of the "great multitude" of all mankind who are not just "sin sick" but literally spiritually "dead in their trespasses and sins." (Eph 2:1+).

As an aside "**sick** ([astheneo](#)), **blind** ([tuphlos](#)), **lame** ([cholos](#)), **and withered** ([xeros](#))" is not just a description of the souls gathered around the pool, but a picture of the spiritual state of the entire Jewish nation! The irony is that those around the pool knew they were sick, but many if not most of the nation (especially the religious group) did not know they were "sick!" The practical application is to remember that the healing good news of the Gospel is most efficacious in the hearts of those who know and acknowledge their soul's sin sickness!

[Ron Teed](#) - At this time there was no provision for the poor who were sick. There were no hospitals they could go to in order to receive treatment, so they were on their own. They came to this particular pool because it was reported to provide miracle cures. That was the only hope they had.

**ILLUSTRATION** - But invalids were probably not the only people drawn to this site. Think about the times in our lifetime when supposed miracles have been reported. What has been the response to such miracles by the public? They have flocked to the places where the miracles were reported to have taken place. One example that comes to mind is the woman in California some years ago who reported having received revelations from Saint Joseph. It was not long before crowds began to gather outside of her home. People even came from other countries just to be near the place where these miracles were reported to have taken place. Soon people were buying any house that was for sale near hers so they could be close to where the

miracle occurred. There were even reports of armed guards required to protect the shrine that was built to Saint Joseph not far from her home. (Hughes, Kent, Preaching the Word, John 5:1-18.)

**Charles Swindoll** writes that "When Jesus earlier cleansed the temple (John 2:13-22), He claimed ownership of Judaism's most visible symbol. His purpose was to **restore worship**. Here, on His next visit to Jerusalem, He claimed ownership of Judaism's most treasured institution: the Sabbath. His purpose on this occasion was to **restore grace**. When Jesus arrived in Jerusalem, He apparently visited the sanitarium that lay in the shadow of the great temple built by Herod. The temple authorities, especially the Pharisees among them, would never have entered the place and probably rebuked any Jew who did....Generally accepted theology held that illness was the result of God's judgment for sin (Jn 9:2); he would not have found much sympathy in the temple. (BORROW [Insights on John](#) or see [Insights on John](#) scroll up and down for more text) (bolding added)

**Spurgeon's Exposition** - Invalid persons, diseased, and scarcely able to move. What a sight for the Great Physician ([Jehovah Rapha](#)) to look upon! The whole world must have been to Him like one huge hospital, full of "impotent folk, blind, halt withered." Wherever he went, he was surrounded by the sick, and sad, and suffering, those who were afflicted physically, mentally, and spiritually. But there was a special reason for the gathering together of so many sufferers at the pool of Bethesda. (See his exposition - scroll down after his sermon [Impotence and Omnipotence](#))

In **Spurgeon's** sermon [Jesus at Bethsheda](#) he asked his audience "to go with me to the pool with the five porches, around which the sick are lying. Walk tenderly amongst the groups of lame and blind! Nay, do not close your eyes. It will do you good to see the sorrowful sight, to mark what sin has done and to what sorrows our father Adam has made us heirs. Why are they all here? They are here because sometimes the waters bubble up with a healing virtue. Whether visibly stirred by an angel or not it is not necessary for us here to discuss; but it was generally believed that an angel descended and touched the water—this rumour attracted the sick from all quarters. As soon as the stir was seen in the waters, the whole mass probably leaped into the pool—those who could not leap themselves were pushed in by their attendants. Alas! how small the result! Many were disappointed; only one was rewarded for the leap; whosoever first stepped in was healed, but only the first. For the poor and meagre chance of winning this cure the sick folk lingered in Bethesda's arches year after year. The impotent man in the narrative had most likely spent the better part of his thirty-eight years in waiting at this famous pool, buoyed up by the slender hope that he might one day be first of the throng. On the Sabbath mentioned in the text, the angel had not come to him, but something better had come, for Jesus Christ, the angel's Master was there.

**Spurgeon** on *waiting* (albeit not in best manuscripts) - Now, I commend this man for waiting; I admire him for his patience and his perseverance; but I beg you not to make his case your own. He waited, for Jesus was not there. You may not wait, you must not wait; for Jesus is here. There was necessity for him to wait. As I have told you, there was an angel and a pool, and nothing more; but where Christ is, there should be no waiting. Any soul that believes in Christ to-night will be saved to-night. Any soul that looks to Christ to-night shall be saved, even though he looks from the ends of the earth. Thou mayest look now; nay, thou art commanded so to do. "Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation." "Harden not your hearts, as in the provocation." There, in that pew, or in yonder aisles, if you turn your eye by faith to Jesus, the Living One on the throne of the Highest, you shall obtain immediate cure. Waiting is all very well at the pool of Bethesda; but waiting at the pool of ordinances, as I have heard some say, is not according to the Scriptures. I read nothing about waiting there; but I do read this, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved."

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#### TECHNICAL NOTES:

**[Waiting for the moving of the waters]** - This phrase and all of verse 4 are not accepted by most sources as genuine writings in the original Greek manuscripts.

**Bratcher** - In TEV the last half of verse 3 and all of verse 4 are included in a footnote, indicating that these verses do not appear in the earliest and best Greek manuscripts. It seems likely that this part of the text was added by some ancient scribe as a kind of marginal note, explaining why the sick people gathered about the pool and how they reacted when the water was stirred up (perhaps by an underground stream that flowed in from time to time). This explanation probably represents a popular belief held by the people of that day, that is, that the stirring up of the water was caused by an angel of the Lord, and that whoever should be the first sick person to go down into the pool after the water was stirred up was healed from whatever disease he had. ([UBS Handbook - John](#))

**NET NOTE** - The majority of later manuscripts (C3 Θ Ψ 078 f1, 13 ) add the following to Jn 5:3-4: "**waiting for the moving of the water. 4 For an angel of the Lord went down and stirred up the water at certain times. Whoever first stepped in after the stirring of the water was healed from whatever disease which he suffered.**" Other manuscripts include only Jn 5:3b (Ac D 33 lat) or Jn 5:4 (A L it). **Few textual scholars today would accept the authenticity of any portion of Jn 5:3b-4, for they are not found in the earliest and best witnesses** ( 66, 75 κ B C\* T pc co), they include un-Johannine vocabulary and syntax, several of

the manuscripts that include the verses mark them as spurious (with an asterisk or obelisk), and because there is a great amount of textual diversity among the witnesses that do include the verses. The present translation follows NA27 in omitting the verse number, a procedure also followed by a number of other modern translations.

**ILLUSTRATION** from **J Vernon McGee** - Many years ago when I was pastor in Pasadena, I went up one year to speak at the Preventorium where little fellows and girls who had weak lungs or tuberculosis were cared for. They presented an Easter program. There was one little fellow there who quoted this entire fifth chapter of John, all forty-seven verses. He made only one error and I always felt it wasn't much of an error. In John 5:3, he quoted it like this, "In these lay a great multitude of **important** folk." (ED: KJV has "**impotent**") Quite a few people smiled when he said that. I got to thinking about it and realized he was correct. **They were important.** One of them caused the Lord Jesus to come to this place, and any of the others could have turned to Him. They were important to Him. ([John 5 Commentary](#) or BORROW [Gospel of John Volume 1](#))

**John 5:4 for an angel of the Lord went down at certain seasons into the pool and stirred up the water; whoever then first, after the stirring up of the water, stepped in was made well from whatever disease with which he was afflicted.**

BGT John 5:4

KJV John 5:4 For an angel went down at a certain season into the pool, and troubled the water: whosoever then first after the troubling of the water stepped in was made whole of whatsoever disease he had.

NET John 5:3 A great number of sick, blind, lame, and paralyzed people were lying in these walkways.

CSB John 5:4 [because an angel would go down into the pool from time to time and stir up the water. Then the first one who got in after the water was stirred up recovered from whatever ailment he had]. **NOTE** - Other manuscripts omit bracketed text

ESV John 5:3 In these lay a multitude of invalids-- blind, lame, and paralyzed.

NIV John 5:3 Here a great number of disabled people used to lie--the blind, the lame, the paralyzed.

NLT John 5:3 Crowds of sick people-- blind, lame, or paralyzed-- lay on the porches. **(NOTE - Some manuscripts add waiting for a certain movement of the water, 4 for an angel of the Lord came from time to time and stirred up the water. And the first person to step in after the water was stirred was healed of whatever disease he had.)**

NRS John 5:3 In these lay many invalids-- blind, lame, and paralyzed. **(NOTE** - Other ancient authorities add, wholly or in part, waiting for the stirring of the water; 4for an angel of the Lord went down at certain seasons into the pool, and stirred up the water; whoever stepped in first after the stirring of the water was made well from whatever disease that person had.)

NJB John 5:4

NAB John 5:4

GWN John 5:3 Under these porches a large number of sick people-people who were blind, lame, or paralyzed-used to lie.

BBE John 5:4

RSV John 5:4

- **first:** Ps 119:60 Pr 6:4 8:17 Ec 9:10 Ho 13:13 Mt 6:33 11:12 Lu 13:24-28 16:16
- **was made:** 2Ki 5:10-14 Eze 47:8 Zec 13:1 14:8 1Co 6:11 1Jn 1:7
- [John 5 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Fanciful Picture  
Beware of Unscriptural paintings!

for ([gar](#) - term of explanation) **an angel of the Lord went down at certain seasons into the pool([kolumbethra](#)) and stirred up the water** - While this text is likely not genuine, I would still note it says "an angel" and not "the angel" of which there were many appearances in the OT.

**whoever then first, after the stirring up of the water, stepped in was made well from whatever disease with which he was**

afflicted

[ESV Study Bible \(borrow\)](#) - Jn 5:4 should not be considered part of Scripture, although Jn 5:7 (which is in all manuscripts) shows that people believed something like what this statement reports.

[Brian Bell](#) - Do people really receive Divine healings at certain places/spa's? - I know of people who swore by Murrieta Hot Springs when it was open to the public. 1. There is the [spa at Lourdes](#); the [shrine at Guadeloupe](#); the pool of Bethesda. a) Surely some medicinal value. Maybe high in minerals, iron, etc. 2. Every country has special places like this, where people flock by the hundreds to be healed! 3. Unfortunately their focus gets distracted on how they might be healed, rather than on the One who can truly heal.

**Jon Courson** - Tradition said the first one in the pool after the water stirred would be healed. That's what the law, religion, and man's regulations always say. "Be the first. Be the best. Try harder. Fight your way to the top. God helps those who help themselves." (See [Jon Courson's Application Commentary](#) - scroll up and down to show more text)

[Spurgeon's Exposition](#) - It was the last remnant of miracle. Such things were common enough in Judaea in her better days; but now the times of the prophets had ceased, and the day of miracles was almost over. Here, at Bethesda, were just a few relics and remnants of the good old days. Only one was cured, he that stepped into the pool first after the angel had troubled the water. It was but a scanty power that was left to the troubled water; but it was quite enough, if only one in a thousand was healed, to bring a crowd of people to wait around the pool. If only one person in a year were saved, I should not wonder if you thronged the place to hear the gospel that saved him; but your privilege is much greater. Here all who come, if they will hear and believe, shall find healing. It is not the first only, but even unto the last who shall step into the pool, that shall be healed.

**Henry Morris** has an interesting comment on **troubled the water** - This verse is omitted in certain manuscripts, along with the last part of John 5:3. Because of what seems to be the unlikelihood of this cyclic miracle, most modern versions have omitted it. **The problem is, however, that John 5:7 (which is in all the manuscripts) makes no sense without it.** Furthermore, the great majority of the manuscripts do include all these verses. Whether the miracle seems reasonable or not to our scientific minds, it is probable that it was recorded by John in his original text and was later deleted in some manuscripts because of the skepticism of the copyists. There is nothing impossible about the miracle no matter how unusual it seems. Perhaps God, in view of the long absence of a prophetic voice in Israel, elected to maintain this continuing witness to His grace and power in Jerusalem as a sort of perpetual Messianic promise to be repeated regularly until Christ would come (ED: I LIKE DR MORRIS BUT HE IS DEFINITELY SPECULATING IN THE LAST PORTION OF HIS COMMENT). (Borrow [The Defender's Study Bible](#))

**J. Vernon McGee** - There are a number of people today, just as there were then, who are sick in their minds, ignorant, and superstitious. There are quite a few who go to faith healers today who believe they get healed. There is always a question whether or not they were ever really sick. Another question is whether they stay permanently healed. My point is that the Lord Jesus Christ heals today just as He did at the pool of Bethesda, and that one is not healed by some moving of the water. ([John 5 Commentary](#) or BORROW [Gospel of John Volume 1](#))

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**David Guzik** has an interesting comment on whether the healing waters of the pool were real or not - If there were people genuinely healed by the waters of the Pool of Bethesda, it was one of many unusual occasions healing in the Bible.

- Some were healed by a purified pot of stew (2 Kings 4:38-41)
- Naaman was healed by washing in the Jordan River (2 Kings 5:10-14)
- One was healed by touching the bones of Elisha (2 Kings 13:20-21)
- Some were healed when the shadow of Peter fell upon them (Acts 5:14-16)
- Some were healed when Paul's handkerchiefs were laid upon them (Acts 19:11-12)

God can and does do things in unexpected ways. But something isn't necessarily from God simply because it is unexpected or unusual. ([John 5 Commentary](#))

**John 5:5 A man was there who had been ill for thirty-eight years.**

- **thirty:** Jn 5:14 Jn 9:1,21 Mk 9:21 Lu 8:43 Lk 13:16 Ac 3:2 Acts 4:22 Acts 9:33 Acts 14:8
- [John 5 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**THIRTY EIGHT YEARS  
OF AN ILLNESS**

**A man was there who had been ill** (invalid - [astheneia](#)) **for thirty-eight years** - The text does not tell us the nature of his presumed life-long illness, but from the context (being told to arise and walk) he is clearly paralyzed in some manner and to some degree. It is notable that the average life expectancy in Jesus' day is said to be between 20-30 years, so this is surely a condition he had suffered his entire life (possibly from birth). If it is related to sin (cf Jn 5:14<sup>±</sup>), it is difficult to imagine what sin this might have been, for the man would most likely have been just a child when he was afflicted! The point is that this man has been in a hopeless state for a very long time! (*Like all of Adam's children before we met the Savior!*) The length of time serves to emphasize the greatness of the miracle as well as the fact that God had not lost sight of this man (*Even as He has not lost sight of you or me!*)

It is interesting that Israel was "sick" for 38 years wandering around in the wilderness - "Now the time that it took for us to come from Kadesh-barnea until we crossed over the brook Zered was **thirty-eight years**, until all the generation of the men of war perished from within the camp, as the LORD had sworn to them." (Dt 2:14+)

**Spurgeon's Exposition** - That was a great portion of the man's life. If he was a full-grown man when he was attacked with the infirmity, he had now become old and gray. What a long time to be afflicted, thirty and eight years! **Have we not with us at this time some who have been afflicted with the soul-sickness of sin more than thirty and eight years?**

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**III** (sickness) (769) [astheneia](#) from **a** = without + **sthénos** = strength, bodily vigor) means literally without strength or bodily vigor = want of strength = lacking strength. Literally **astheneia** refers to bodily diseases or ailments (Lk 5:15, 13:11, 12, Jn 5:5, 11:4, 28:9). Another meaning of **astheneia** is incapacity to do or experience something, an inability to produce results, a state of weakness or limitation (1Co 15:43; 2Co 11:30; 12:5, 9, 10, 13:4; Ro 8:27; Heb 4:15; 5:2; 7:28; 11:34) Paul's use in 1Co 2:3 conveys the sense of weakness in terms of courage. **Richards** writes that "This group of words expresses powerlessness. The weak are without strength, incapacitated in some serious way. (Expository Dictionary)

**Astheneia - 23v - ailments(1), diseases(1), ill(1), illness(1), infirmities(1), sickness(3), sicknesses(2), weak(1), weakness(9), weaknesses(4).** Matt. 8:17; Lk. 5:15; Lk. 8:2; Lk. 13:11; Lk. 13:12; Jn. 5:5; Jn. 11:4; Acts 28:9; Rom. 6:19; Rom. 8:26; 1 Co. 2:3; 1 Co. 15:43; 2 Co. 11:30; 2 Co. 12:5; 2 Co. 12:9; 2 Co. 12:10; 2 Co. 13:4; Gal. 4:13; 1 Tim. 5:23; Heb. 4:15; Heb. 5:2; Heb. 7:28; Heb. 11:34

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## Good News for Feet

For you, Lord, have delivered me from death . . . that I may walk before the Lord in the land of the living.  
Psalm 116:8–9

Today's Scripture & Insight: John 5:1–9

The ad brought a smile to my face: "The most comfortable socks in the history of feet." Then, extending its claim of good news for feet even further, the advertiser said that because socks remain the most requested clothing item at homeless shelters, for every pair of socks purchased the company would donate a pair to someone in need.

Imagine the smile when Jesus healed the feet of a man who hadn't been able to walk for thirty-eight years (John 5:2–8). Now imagine the opposite look on the faces of the temple officials who weren't impressed by Jesus's care for the feet or heart of someone who had gone without help for so long. They accused the man and Jesus of breaking a religious law that allows no work to be done on the Sabbath (vv. 9–10, 16–17). They saw rules where Jesus saw the need for mercy.

At this point the man didn't even know who had given him new feet. Only later would he be able to say that it was Jesus who had made him well (vv. 13–15)—the same Jesus who would allow His own feet to be nailed to a tree to offer that man—and us—the best news in the history of broken bodies, minds, and hearts. By: Mart DeHaan ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

What needs do you see in those around you? In what ways have you seen Jesus meet your own needs?

Jesus, allow me to see and meet the needs of others.

To learn more about the life of Christ, visit [christianuniversity.org/NT111](http://christianuniversity.org/NT111).

**John 5:6 When Jesus saw him lying there, and knew that he had already been a long time in that condition, He said to him, "Do you wish to get well?"**



γεν σθαι;

KJV John 5:6 When Jesus saw him lie, and knew that he had been now a long time in that case, he saith unto him, Wilt thou be made whole?

NET John 5:6 When Jesus saw him lying there and when he realized that the man had been disabled a long time already, he said to him, "Do you want to become well?"

CSB John 5:6 When Jesus saw him lying there and knew he had already been there a long time, He said to him, "Do you want to get well?"

ESV John 5:6 When Jesus saw him lying there and knew that he had already been there a long time, he said to him, "Do you want to be healed?"

NIV John 5:6 When Jesus saw him lying there and learned that he had been in this condition for a long time, he asked him, "Do you want to get well?"

NLT John 5:6 When Jesus saw him and knew he had been ill for a long time, he asked him, "Would you like to get well?"

- **knew:** Jn 21:17 Ps 142:3 Heb 4:13,15
- **wish:** Isa 65:1 Jer 13:27 Lu 18:41
- [John 5 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passages:

Isaiah 65:1 "I permitted Myself to be sought by those who did not ask for Me; I permitted Myself to be found by those who did not seek Me. I said, 'Here am I, here am I,' To a nation which did not call on My name.

## JESUS SAW & ASKED WILT THOU BE MADE WHOLE?

**When Jesus saw him lying there, and knew ([ginosko](#)) that he had already been a long time in that condition** - How did Jesus know? This is likely His supernatural knowledge, since he knew that this condition was longstanding. Although Jesus had emptied Himself of His divine prerogatives in Php 2:6-7+, he clearly had the ability to know things that could only be known supernaturally (cf Jn 2:23-25+). Jesus knew the man had been lying there for 38 years because He is God and as God He was omniscient.

**Matthew Henry** - Jesus saw him lie. Observe, When Christ came up to Jerusalem he visited not the palaces, but the hospitals, which is an instance of his humility, and condescension, and tender compassion, and an indication of his great design in coming into the world, which was to seek and save the sick and wounded. ([John 5 Commentary](#))

**John Heading** on Jesus **knew** - We have already noted this divine introspection of the inner heart of men in passages such as Jn 1:47-48+; Jn 2:24-25+; Jn 4:17-18+. We will see this fact later in passages such as "Jesus knew from the beginning who they were that believed not, and who should betray him" (Jn 6:64); "Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents" (Jn 9:3). Additionally, the Lord knew facts that were ordinarily hidden from men, such as "Lazarus is dead" (Jn 11:14); "Jesus knew that his hour was come" (Jn 13:1); "The cock shall not crow, till thou hast denied me thrice" (Jn 13:38); "ye shall be scattered" (Jn 16:32); "knowing all things that should come upon him" (Jn 18:4). Events unknown to us in heart, time and space, are all known to the Lord. ([What the Bible Teaches - John](#))

**Frédéric Louis Godet** comments on how Jesus **knew that he had already been a long time** - (This) indicates one of those instantaneous perceptions by which the truth revealed itself to Jesus in the degree which was demanded by His task at the moment. Compare Jn 1:47-49+ Jn 4:17-19+. ([John 5 Commentary](#))

**THOUGHT** - Jesus as God Incarnate saw the suffering of the multitude then, but now Jesus seated at the right hand of the Father still sees our suffering. Are you suffering beloved (most of us are either in a trial, coming out of one or about to go into one!)? Jesus sees your situation! He is the same yesterday, today and forever (Heb 13:8+). And "*yesterday*" (so to speak) He saw Hagar's pathetic plight looking on as the **Angel of the LORD** (Ge 16:7), the One she named **Ei Roi, the God Who Sees** (Ge 16:13)! Cast your burden on Him and He will sustain you (Ps 55:22+), for He is still **Ei Roi, the God Who Sees**. **Spurgeon** adds "*that the Saviour knows your case. Jesus saw him lie there. There were a great many objects for the Saviour's eye to rest upon, but He fixed His gaze upon this man, long bed-ridden, thirty-eight years impotent. Even so, Jesus knows all about your case. He sees you lie just where you are to-night, impotent, without hope, without light, without*

*faith. He sees you; I want you to feel this to be true. He singles you out amidst this throng, wherever you sit, and His eye is scanning you from head to foot; nay, He looks within as well as without, and reads all that is in your heart."*

### **Why do I feel discouraged**

Why do the shadows come  
And why does my heart feel lonely?  
And long for heaven, home  
When Jesus is my portion  
A constant Friend is He

**His eye is on the sparrow  
And I know He watches me.  
(SING IT OUT BELOVED!)**

**Colin Kruse** adds "Unlike the two miracles recorded earlier in this Gospel, which Jesus performed in response to requests from others, this one takes place at his own initiative: When Jesus saw him lying there and learned that he had been in this condition for a long time, he asked him, 'Do you want to get well?' The word the NIV translates as 'learned' (gnous) is better translated '**knew**' (so NRSV). Jesus had supernatural knowledge of the man's situation (cf. Jn 2:25), as he did in the case of Nathanael (Jn 1:47–48) and of the Samaritan woman (Jn 4:16–19). (Borrow [The Gospel according to John : an introduction and commentary](#))

**Spurgeon's Exposition** - The Great Physician ([Jehovah Rapha](#)) fixed his eye on him, for his was an extraordinary case. Probably he was known and talked of as the man who had been paralyzed eight and thirty years. Note that it does not say, "When the man saw Jesus," but "when Jesus saw him." He did not know Jesus; possibly he had not even heard of his healing power and compassionate love. He was not seeking Jesus; but Jesus was seeking him. It was so with many of us; and therefore we sing —

### **Jesus sought me when a stranger,**

Wandering from the fold of God;  
He, to rescue me from danger,  
Interposed his precious blood."

When Jesus saw the impotent man, — And knew that he had been now a long time in that case, And a long time in that place, too, — He saith unto him, Wilt thou be made whole? That must have seemed a strange question. What was he there for, if not to be made whole? But I will show you, by-and-by, that there was wisdom in the question of Jesus. It was no idle curiosity that moved him to enquire of the man whether he was willing to be made whole.

**He said to him, "Do you wish (want) to get well ([hugies](#))?" - ESV = "Do you want to be healed?"** It is interesting that He does not say "Do you want to be saved?" It was a "pertinent and sympathetic question."

**THOUGHT BY SPURGEON** (his [application](#) of the passage) - The Saviour would not let the impotent man lie there satisfied because he was by the pool. No, no. He said to him, "Why are you here? Have you not some desire? Do you not want to be made whole?" My dear hearer, I wish that you were able to say "Yes" to this question. Have you come here to-night that your sin may be forgiven, that your soul may be renewed by divine grace, that you may meet with Christ? If so, I want to keep you to that point, and not to let you come, and take a sitting here, and come, and come, and come, and come, and be just like the door on its hinges out there, which turns in and turns out again, and is not a bit the better for it. Oh, do not get into mere religious habits! Ritualistic habits they will be to you, simple as the ritual will be. You come, and you go, and you are satisfied. This will never do. Christ arouses your desire as he says, "Wilt thou be made whole?"

**Bratcher** writes that "In the question **Do you want to get well?** there is no need to press the force of the verb **want**, as though to imply that the man's own will had some force in effecting the cure (BUT SEE SPURGEON BELOW). The question merely means "Would you like to get well?" ([UBS Handbook - John](#))

**THOUGHT BY SPURGEON** on wish/want - I pray you to remember that it is yours to will, for Christ said to this man, "Wilt thou be made whole? Thou canst not make thyself whole, but thou canst will and wish to be made whole." **God's Holy Spirit has given to many of you to will** and to do according to his good pleasure. **You will never be saved against your will; God drags nobody to heaven by the ears.** There must be in you a willing mind consenting to the work of his sovereign grace; and if it be there, I want you to exercise it to-night, as Christ wished this man to exercise it: "Wilt thou be made whole? Hast thou any wish that way, any desire or longing for healing?" I want to stir this fire, and make it burn; and if there be only a spark of desire, I would breathe upon it, and pray the Holy Spirit to breathe upon it to make it into a great flame. Paul said, "To will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good, I find not." I believe that there are some here

who have the will to be saved; God be thanked for that!

**Warren Wiersbe** comments that Jesus "asked him if he wanted to be healed. You would think that the man would have responded with an enthusiastic, "Yes! I want to be healed!" But, instead, he began to give excuses! He had been in that sad condition for so long that his will was as paralyzed as his body. But if you compare John 5:6 with John 5:40, you will see that Jesus had a spiritual lesson in mind as well. Indeed, this man did illustrate the tragic spiritual state of the nation (**ED: THEY WERE UNWILLING TO COME!** cf Jn 1:11) ([Bible Exposition Commentary](#))

**Frédéric Louis Godet** comments on **Do you wish to get well** - Jesus endeavors thus, as Lange says, to draw the sick man from the dark discouragement in which this long and useless waiting had plunged him, and to reanimate hope within him. At the same time, Jesus by means of this question wishes to turn away His thought from the means of healing on which it was exclusively fixed, and to give him a perception of a new means, the living Being Who is to become for him the *true Bethesda* Comp. the similar words of Peter to the impotent man, Acts 3:4+ "**Look (aorist imperative) at us.**" Faith, awakened by his look fixed upon Him Who is speaking to him, will be, as it were, the channel through which the force from above will penetrate within him. ([John 5 Commentary](#))

**Spurgeon** -Jesus, having looked upon this man with a special eye of regard, said to him, "Wilt thou be made whole?" I have already hinted that this was not said because Christ wanted information, but because he wished to arouse the man's attention. On account of its being the Sabbath, the man was not thinking of being cured, for to the Jew it seemed a most unlikely thing that cures should be wrought on a Sabbath day. ([Jesus at Bethsheda](#))

**Jon Courson** - To whom did Jesus come? Not to those closest to the edge of the pool, but to the one who was clear at the back, farthest out of the way. He came not to the aggressor, the initiator, the leader—but to the one who was the least competitive of them all. (See [Jon Courson's Application Commentary](#) - scroll up and down to show more text)

**David Thompson** - Dr. H. A. Ironside said, "We are all like these impotent people gathered by the pool." We have all been sick in sin and blind to God. We cannot in and of ourselves walk tall and straight in the righteous ways of God. This is God's verdict of us all that we are sick, blind, lame and withered by sin and none of us are in any position to debate with God about this point. We were all spiritually dry and dead and that is exactly the kind of person Jesus Christ loves to touch. There is a fountain that can heal any sinner from their sins. It is a fountain filled with blood drawn from Immanuel's veins, and sinners plunged beneath that flood lose all their guilty stains.

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**Spurgeon** on **knew that he had already been a long time** - Concerning the man at the pool, Jesus knew that he had been a long time in that case. He knows the years that you have been waiting. You remember being carried to the house of God by your mother. You recollect, as a boy, listening to sermons that seemed to startle you; and you went home to your little bedroom, and cried to God for mercy; but you forgot your impressions. They were like the morning mist, that vanishes in the rising sun. You came to London; you grew up to be a man; you became careless about divine things; you shook off all your early impressions. Still, you went to hear the Word preached, and oftentimes you half hoped that you might get a blessing. You heard the Word; but faith was not mixed with what you heard, so you missed the blessing. Yet still, you always had a wish that it should come to you. You never could despise godly people, or the things of Christ. You could not get them for yourself; at least, you thought you could not; but you always had some lingering wish that you were numbered with the people of God. Now, the Lord Jesus knows all about that, and the many years in which you have been waiting as a hearer; but a hearer only, and not a doer of the Word; impressed at times, but doing violence to your better feelings, and going back to a careless life. My Lord knows all about you. I cannot pick you out in this congregation; but remember, while I am preaching to-night, miracles will be wrought; processes which will change the very nature of men are going on within this house; for Christ is being preached, and his gospel is being set forth, and this is not done, with prayerful earnestness, in vain. God will bless it; he is going to bless somebody to-night. Who that somebody may be, or how many hundred somebodies there will be, I cannot guess; but he will bless his own Word, and why should he not bless you? He sees just who you are, and where you are, and what you are.

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**QUESTION - [Why did Jesus ask the man at the Pool of Bethesda, "Do you want to be made well?" \(John 5:6\)?](#)**

**ANSWER** - The apostle John records a select number of signs or miracles that help demonstrate who Jesus is and the importance of believing in Him for eternal life (John 20:30–31). These miracles showed Jesus' authority—an authority that only the Creator could have. In recounting one of these remarkable miracles, John records that Jesus asks an infirm man at the Pool of Bethesda, "Do you want to be made well?" (John 5:6, NKJV).

On a Sabbath during a feast of the Jews (John 5:1, 9, 16), Jesus sought out a man who had been sick and unable to walk for thirty-eight years (John 5:5). This man was part of a multitude of those with severe ailments who would wait by the Pool of Bethesda in hopes of being healed (John 5:3–4). Jesus knew that this man had been there a long time in that condition, and He asked the man at the Pool of Bethesda, "Do you want to be made well?" Obviously, the man wanted to be made well physically. The man's being at

that location was an indicator of that desire. So, when Jesus asked the man, “Do you want to be made well?” He wasn’t asking the man simply about his physical well-being. Jesus also cared for the man’s spiritual well-being. Before resolving the spiritual or the physical problems the man was dealing with, Jesus had this man think about his need.

The sick man responds that he had no one to put him in the pool—thought to have healing powers—at the right time. In his mind, he had no means to resolve his problem. The man acknowledged that he needed help (John 5:7). After the man admitted his own inability, Jesus gives him an incredible direction: “**Get up, pick up your pallet and walk**” (John 5:8NASB). **Immediately**—even before the man could obey the command—the man was healed. Immediately after that, the man did what Jesus had directed him to do: “He picked up his mat and walked” (John 5:9).

Those who saw the man carrying his bedding on the Sabbath argued that it was not lawful for him to do that (John 5:10). The man responded that he was carrying his mat at the instruction of the man who had healed him (John 5:11). In this, the man most likely recognized that, because Jesus had demonstrated power over nature, Jesus must also have [authority over the Sabbath](#).

Later, Jesus found the man again and told him, “See, you are well again. Stop sinning or something worse may happen to you” (John 5:14). With these words, Jesus was continuing to teach this man that there is more to wellness than physical health. The man seemed to understand that Jesus’ question “Do you want to be made well?” was about more than physical wellness, because, when Jesus found the man again, the man was in the temple (John 5:14).

This miracle shows Jesus’ authority and identity. It illustrates that He is indeed the One in whom we believe for eternal life. It also can help remind us that true wellness is about much more than physical health. If Jesus were to ask us, “Do you want to be made well?” would we recognize, like the man at the Pool of Bethesda, that we can’t resolve our problems ourselves? Would we look to Him as this man did? [GotQuestions.org](http://GotQuestions.org)

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## Hope Restored

When Jesus saw him lying there . . . , he asked him, “Do you want to get well?” John 5:6

Today’s Scripture & Insight: John 5:1–8

Does the sun rise in the east? Is the sky blue? Is the ocean salty? Is the atomic weight of cobalt 58.9? Okay, that last one you might only know if you’re a science geek or tend to dabble in trivia, but the other questions have an obvious answer: Yes. In fact, questions like these are usually mixed with a hint of sarcasm.

If we’re not careful, our modern—sometimes jaded—ears can hear a bit of sarcasm in Jesus’s question to an invalid: “**Do you want to get well?**” (John 5:6). The obvious answer would seem to be, “Are you kidding me?! I’ve been wanting help for thirty-eight years!” But there’s no sarcasm present, that’s the furthest thing from the truth. Jesus’s voice is always filled with compassion, and His questions are always posed for our good.

Jesus knew the man wanted to get well. He also knew it had probably been a long time since anyone had made an offer to care. Before the divine miracle, Jesus’s intent was to restore in him a hope that had grown cold. He did this by asking a rather obvious question, and then giving ways to respond: “Get up! Pick up your mat and walk” (Jn 5:8). We’re like the invalid, each of us with places in our lives where hope has withered. He sees us and compassionately invites us to believe in hope again, to believe in Him. By: John Blase ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

In what ways has your hope grown cold? How has Jesus revealed His compassion to you?

Jesus, there are places in my life where hope has grown weak and cold, or even dead. You know this. You also know I want to hope again, I truly do. Restore to me the joy of hope, a hope born by trusting You.

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## Becoming Whole

Do you want to be made well? — John 5:6

Today’s Scripture: John 5:1-9

John Steinbeck’s Pulitzer prizewinning novel [The Grapes of Wrath](#) begins with a scene in drought-ravaged Oklahoma during the Great Depression. With the crops dying and the land choked by dust, the women watched the men to see if they would break under the strain. When they saw the men’s will to carry on, they took heart. Steinbeck writes, “Women and children knew deep in themselves that no misfortune was too great to bear if their men were whole.” The issue was not happiness, prosperity, or satisfaction, but wholeness. This is the great need of us all.

In the King James Version of the Bible, the word whole is often used to describe Jesus' work of physical healing. When the Lord encountered a man who had been an invalid for 38 years, He asked, "Wilt thou be made whole?" (John 5:5-6 kjv). After Jesus healed the man, He challenged him to also embrace spiritual wholeness: "See, you have been made well. Sin no more, lest a worse thing come upon you" (v.14).

If we only want something Jesus can do for us, our relationship with Him will be limited. When we want Jesus Himself, He brings completeness to our lives. Christ wants, first and foremost, to make us whole. By: David C. McCasland ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

I thank Thee for Thy precious Word  
Where Thou didst make me see  
My sinful self, my helpless soul,  
Made whole by trusting Thee.  
—Anon.

Only Jesus can give wholeness to a broken life.

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## Not Just A Victim

When Jesus saw him lying there, . . . He said to him, "Do you want to be made well?". — John 5:6

Today's Scripture: John 5:1-9

David Gelernter suffered permanent injuries when he opened an explosive package sent by the man known as the Unabomber. But he has refused to view himself as a helpless victim or to wallow in self-pity. Gelernter writes, "When you encourage a man to see himself as a victim of anything—crime, poverty, bigotry, bad luck—you are piling bricks on his chest."

The tendency to see oneself as a victim of life's injustices is widespread today. It's easy for all of us to feel that our misfortunes have somehow deprived us of the opportunity or the will to become the kind of people we long to be.

I have often pondered the question Jesus asked the man lying by the pool of Bethesda: "Do you want to be made well?" (Jn. 5:6). The man answered with an excuse that was overpowered by the command of Christ: "Rise, take up your bed, and walk" (v.8).

Because we live in a sin-damaged world, we will suffer injustice. Many things aren't in our power to change. Obstacles don't disappear merely by our exercise of faith. So what does the Lord want us to do about circumstances that may paralyze us? Hear His question to the man by the pool, "Do you want to be made well?" Then rely on His strength and act on the things you can change. By: David C. McCasland ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Say not, "The days are evil. Who's to blame?"  
And fold the hand and acquiesce—oh, shame!  
Stand up, speak out, and bravely, in God's name,  
Be strong!  
—Babcock

We need not be victims, because Christ is the victor.

**John 5:7 The sick man answered Him, "Sir, I have no man to put me into the pool when the water is stirred up, but while I am coming, another steps down before me."**

BGT John 5:7 πεκρθη ατ σθεν ν· κριε, νθρωπον ο κ χω να ταν ταραχθ τ δωρ β λ με ες τ ν κολυμβ θραν· ν δ ρχομαι γ , λλος πρ μο καταβα νει.

KJV John 5:7 The impotent man answered him, Sir, I have no man, when the water is troubled, to put me into the pool: but while I am coming, another steppeth down before me.

NET John 5:7 The sick man answered him, "Sir, I have no one to put me into the pool when the water is stirred up. While I am trying to get into the water, someone else goes down there before me."

CSB John 5:7 "Sir," the sick man answered, "I don't have a man to put me into the pool when the water is

stirred up, but while I'm coming, someone goes down ahead of me."

ESV John 5:7 The sick man answered him, "Sir, I have no one to put me into the pool when the water is stirred up, and while I am going another steps down before me."

NIV John 5:7 "Sir," the invalid replied, "I have no one to help me into the pool when the water is stirred. While I am trying to get in, someone else goes down ahead of me."

NLT John 5:7 "I can't, sir," the sick man said, "for I have no one to put me into the pool when the water bubbles up. Someone else always gets there ahead of me."

NRS John 5:7 The sick man answered him, "Sir, I have no one to put me into the pool when the water is stirred up; and while I am making my way, someone else steps down ahead of me."

NJB John 5:7 'Sir,' replied the sick man, 'I have no one to put me into the pool when the water is disturbed; and while I am still on the way, someone else gets down there before me.'

NAB John 5:7 The sick man answered him, "Sir, I have no one to put me into the pool when the water is stirred up; while I am on my way, someone else gets down there before me."

YLT John 5:7 The ailing man answered him, 'Sir, I have no man, that, when the water may be troubled, he may put me into the pool, and while I am coming, another doth go down before me.'

- **I have:** De 32:36 Ps 72:12 142:4 Ro 5:6 2Co 1:8-10
- **before:** Jn 5:4 1Co 9:24
- [John 5 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## MAN'S CONDITION PREVENTS ENTRY INTO POOL

Notice that Jesus asked him a specific question, but he does not give a direct answer. He in essence gives an excuse. His focus is on the pool and how he can get into the pool before others. He is unaware that the Healer is standing before him!

**The sick ([astheneo](#)) man answered Him, "Sir, I have no man to put ([ballo](#) - "throw") me into the pool ([kolumbethra](#)) when the water is stirred up ([tarasso](#) - "bubbles up" - NLT) - Sir is [kurios](#) which is found over 665x in the Bible and is usually translated "Lord," but in this context it is clear the paralytic does not recognize that he is speaking to the Lord, much like the Samaritan woman and the Royal official ([kurios](#) use in Jn 4:11, 15, 19+ Jn 4:49). Jn 5:13 underscores the fact that this man did not know Who Jesus word so that his use of "[kurios](#)" was as a polite address. It would be reasonable to see the invalid man now viewing Jesus as just the Man Who might be able to help him get into the pool first. 456 consecutive months of waiting; 13,680 days getting beat to the water!**

**Robertson** notes stirred up is "tarassō, old verb to agitate (Matthew 2:3). The popular belief was that, at each outflow of this intermittent spring, there was healing power in the water for the first one getting in." ([John 5 Commentary](#))

**MacArthur** comments "Like many people, his expectations of what Jesus could do for him were limited to what he believed was possible."

**While I am coming, another steps down before me** - This is where the man's faith was! It was in the supposed healing power of the bubbling waters! He explains that his attempt to get into the stirring waters (which they thought had healing properties) are cut off by others who presumably were more mobile, so he never made it to the stirring waters. The implication is that healing was associated not with the pool per se or the water in the pool, but when the water was stirred up and this would only last a finite amount of time. The man's point is he cannot get in the pool quick enough to receive healing. And I use the word "healing" loosely for we simply do not know with certainty that people did receive genuine healing by stepping into the bubbling waters. While it is possible, further comments are only speculation.

**[THOUGHT BY SPURGEON](#)** - In addition to this, our Lord knew all this poor man's disappointments. Many times, when he had striven to get first to the water's edge, and did think that he should be able to take the happy plunge, in went some one else before him, and his hopes were gone. Another came up out of the water healed; and then, with a heavy sigh, he fell back upon his couch, and felt that it might be a long time before the angel stirred the water again, and even then he might be disappointed again, he recollected the many times when he had lost all hope; and there he lay almost in despair. Now I think I hear some one here to-night saying, "My brother found the Lord. My friend, who came with me here, found the Lord. I have lived to see my mother die in sure and certain hope of glory. I have friends who have come to Christ, but I am still living



without him. When there were special services, I hoped that I might have been specially blessed. I have been to prayer-meetings, I have read my Bible in secret, and I have sometimes hoped— it was but a little hope, but still I hoped— ‘May be, one of these days, I may be healed.’” Yes, dear friend, and my Lord knows all about that, and he sympathizes in all the grief you feel to-night, and he hears those unspoken wishes of yours, and he knows your longing that you may be healed.

**Heading** comments on the man's faith pointing out that "the exercise of faith depends upon the possession of knowledge, and this the man lacked. Divine mercy was not withheld because of that, else no one could ever be saved from pre-conversion ignorance. ([What the Bible Teaches - John](#))

**John Calvin** - "This sick man does what we nearly all do. He limits God's help to his own ideas and does not dare promise himself more than he conceives in his mind."

**Frédéric Louis Godet** comments on the man's reply to Jesus - The answer of the sick man does not imply the authenticity of Jn 5:4, nor even necessarily that of the end of Jn 5:3. It is sufficiently explained by the fact, known or easy to understand, of the intermittent [ebullition](#) (the act, process, or state of boiling or bubbling up) of the spring. We see by the words: **I have no one**, that he was solitary and poor. ([John 5 Commentary](#))

**Colin Kruse** on **another steps down before me** - Apparently, the belief was that only the first person into the waters after they were 'stirred' would be healed. Later tradition, reflected in the additions to the text in Jn 5:3–4, attributed the stirring of the waters to an angel, but it is more likely to have been caused by the movement of subterranean water. That so many people were at the pool waiting for the stirring of the waters suggests there were occasions when people had been healed at Bethesda....In any case, the man appears to have been ignorant of the miracles Jesus had performed in Jerusalem (Jn 2:23; 3:1–2) and showed no sign of faith that Jesus could heal him. (Borrow [The Gospel according to John : an introduction and commentary](#))

**Spurgeon's Exposition** - Shuffling along, as best I may, to the water's edge, —Then, of course, the curative miracle is wrought, and the curative power of the water is gone until another season, when the angel troubles it again.

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**Stirred up** (disturbed) ([5015](#)) **tarasso** literally means to shake back and forth and therefore to agitate and stir up (like the pool in John 5:4,7, Lxx = Ezek 32:2, 13, Isa 51:15). To shake together, stir up, disturb, unsettle, throw into disorder (Lxx = Ps 46; 2Sa 22:8 = of earth shaking). Most of the NT uses of tarasso are figurative and describe the state of one's mind as stirred up, agitated or experiencing inward commotion.

**Tarasso - 18v - disturbed(1), disturbing(2), stirred(3), stirring(1), terrified(2), troubled(9).** Matt. 2:3; Matt. 14:26; Mk. 6:50; Lk. 1:12; Lk. 24:38; Jn. 5:4; Jn. 5:7; Jn. 11:33; Jn. 12:27; Jn. 13:21; Jn. 14:1; Jn. 14:27; Acts 15:24; Acts 17:8; Acts 17:13; Gal. 1:7; Gal. 5:10; 1 Pet. 3:14

**John 5:8 Jesus said to him, "Get up, pick up your pallet and walk."**

BGT John 5:8 λ γει α τ η σο ς γειρε ρον τ ν κρ βαττ ν σου κα περιπ τει.

KJV John 5:8 Jesus saith unto him, Rise, take up thy bed, and walk.

NET John 5:8 Jesus said to him, "Stand up! Pick up your mat and walk."

CSB John 5:8 "Get up," Jesus told him, "pick up your mat and walk!"

ESV John 5:8 Jesus said to him, "Get up, take up your bed, and walk."

NIV John 5:8 Then Jesus said to him, "Get up! Pick up your mat and walk."

NLT John 5:8 Jesus told him, "Stand up, pick up your mat, and walk!"

- Mt 9:6 Mk 2:11 Lu 5:24 Ac 9:34
- [John 5 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passages:

Matthew 9:6+ "But so that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins"—then He said to the paralytic, "**Get up, pick up** your bed and **go** home." 7 And he got up and went home. 8 But when the crowds saw this, they were awestruck, and glorified God, who had given such authority to men.

Mark 2:9-11+ "Which is easier, to say to the paralytic, 'Your sins are forgiven'; or to say, **Get up**, and **pick up** your pallet and **walk**?' 10 "But so that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins"—He \*said to the paralytic, 11 "I say to you, **get up, pick up your pallet and go home.**"<sup>12</sup> And he got up and immediately picked up the pallet and went out in the sight of everyone, so that they were all amazed and were glorifying God, saying, "We have never seen anything like this."

Mark 3:5+ After looking around at them with anger, grieved at their hardness of heart, He \*said to the man, "**Stretch out** your hand." And he stretched it out, and his hand was restored.

Luke 5:24+ "But, so that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins,"—He said to the paralytic—"I say to you, **get up**, and **pick up** your stretcher and **go** home." 25 Immediately he got up before them, and picked up what he had been lying on, and went home glorifying God. 26 They were all struck with astonishment and began glorifying God; and they were filled with fear, saying, "We have seen remarkable things today."

Acts 9:34+ Peter said to him, "Aeneas, Jesus Christ heals you;**get up** and **make** your bed." Immediately he got up. 35 And all who lived at Lydda and Sharon saw him, and they turned to the Lord (cf Jn 20:30,31).

## CHRIST THE CREATOR COMMANDS

Jesus completely ignores the pool and its supposed healing powers.

**Jesus said to him, "Get up (egeiro), pick up (airo) your pallet (krabattos) and walk (peripateo) - Pick up** is a command in the [aorist imperative](#) ("Just do it!") **Get up** and **walk** are commands in the [present imperative](#) and all three commands would require supernatural power to obey, power provided by [the Holy Spirit](#). Notice Jesus does not even address the issue of the stirring water in the pool. He simply gives the man three commands. He heals the man with His spoken word (the same word that created the universe in Heb 11:3 and now upholds it Heb 1:3)!

**Wiersbe** - He commanded the man to do the very thing he was unable to do, but in **His command was the power of fulfillment** (see Mark 3:5; Heb. 4:12). ([Bible Exposition Commentary](#))

**MacArthur** - Just as Jesus spoke and the world was created (Gen. 1:3, 6, 9, 11, 14, 20, 24, 26; cf. John 1:3; Col. 1:16; Heb. 1:2), so also His words had the power to create a new body (cf. Matt. 8:16; 9:6; Mark 2:11; Luke 6:10; 13:12). Unlike many alleged modern healings, Jesus' healings were complete and instantaneous, with or without faith. This one proves the point, since **the man exhibited no faith in Jesus at all**.

**D A Carson** links Jesus' command to His future word at the time of our resurrection - Jesus' powerful word heals the man:**Get up!** (egeire) anticipates the powerful voice of the Son of God on the last day (Jn 5:28–29), even as it exemplifies that powerful voice now (Jn 5:25). Jesus' word also instructs the man: **Pick up** your mat and **walk**. (Borrow [The Gospel according to John](#))

**J Vernon McGee** comments "He told him to rise (get up), take up his bed, and walk. He was to give up his place there at the pool to somebody else. He's to take his bed because no arrangements will be made for a relapse. There isn't going to be any relapse!" ([John 5 Commentary](#) or BORROW [Gospel of John Volume 1](#))

**Stevenson** - I have heard a teaching going around that the reason people are not healed today is because they do not have enough faith. This tactic is particularly common among reputed faith healers who fail to heal. They simply place a guilt trip on the person whom they attempted to heal, saying that the reason was that the individual did not have enough faith. This man had no faith. He did not even know who Jesus was.

**Spurgeon** - Jesus gave the word of command, saying, "Rise! take up thy bed and walk." The power by which the man arose was not in himself, but in Jesus; it was not the mere sound of the word which made him rise, but it was the divine power which went with it. ([Jesus at Bethesda](#))

Note that this healing of a paralytic is at Jerusalem and thus is **different than the paralytic healings described in the synoptic gospels** (Matthew 9:6+ Mark 2:9-11+ Mark 3:5+ Luke 5:24+ ). Nevertheless it is interesting to observe the effects of Jesus' healing a paralytic - In Mt 9:8 (Mk 2:12 is similar) the Jewish crowd was "awestruck, and glorified God, Who had given such authority to men." = Awe of God, but not necessarily awe of Jesus. In Lk 5:24 the healed paralytic went away glorifying God. **But in none of these healing does the text record that anyone came to believe in Jesus**. In Acts 9:34-35+ the response in Lydda and Sharon

was different to Peter's healing a paralytic - Luke records they saw the healed man "and they turned to (i.e., believed in) the Lord." In John 5 when the healed man was confronted by Jesus in the Temple and told not to sin, he went to the Jews (authorities) and told them it was Jesus Who had healed him. In sum the gospel accounts do not describe any obvious conversions as a result of the healings.

**Spurgeon's Exposition** - This is our Sabbath. Oh, that we might have the same miracle wrought here tonight, upon many spiritually impotent folk!

**THOUGHT BY SPURGEON** - The power to heal that man was in the Christ who stood there, commissioned of God to save sinners, and to help the helpless. Please to recollect that the power that saves, and all of it, is not in the saved man, but in the Christ who saves. I take leave to contradict those who say that salvation is an evolution. All that ever can be evolved out of the sinful heart of man is sin, and nothing else. Salvation is the free gift of God, by Jesus Christ, and the work of it is supernatural. It is done by the Lord himself, and he has power to do it, however weak, nay, however dead in sin, the sinner may be. As a living child of God, I can say to-night, that,—

“On a life I did not live,  
On a death I did not die,  
I stake my whole eternity.”

You who would be saved must do the same; you must look right out of self to him whom God has exalted to be a Prince and a Saviour to the sons of men. The Christ met that man's case, for he was able to do anything for him that he required. He meets your case, my dear hearer, for he can do anything for you that is wanted. Between here and heaven's gate, there shall never be anything required which he cannot give, or any help needed which he is not prepared to render, for he has all power in heaven and in earth.

Next, the Lord can do more for you than you ask of him. This poor man never asked anything of Christ, except by his looks, and by his lying there at the pool. If you feel to-night as if you could not pray, if you have needs that you cannot describe, if there is something wanted, and you do not know what it is, Christ can give it to you. You shall know what it is that you want when you get it; but perhaps now, in his mercy, he does not let you know all your needs. But here is the point, he “is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think.” May he do it in you to-night! Take comfort from the cure of the impotent man, cherish hope, and say, “Why should he not also heal me?”

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**Pallet** (2895) [krabattos](#) means a mattress, pallet, a light bed used as a poor man's bed, cot for one person, which was relatively small and portable. *Krabattos* is a colloquial term for the pallet or mattress that the poor had for bedding and always refers to the bed of a sick person. It could refer to a cot or stretcher on which a sick person might be carried. *Krabattos* is not used in the New Testament to describe the couches on which guests would recline at a dinner. **Zodhiates** says "It denotes a simple kind of bed such as the ancients used to rest on at noon." (Ibid) In a secular use BDAG records "Midas himself took up the pallet on which he had been carried, made his departure, and went back to the field."

**Leon Morris** on **krabattos** - The word is κράβαττος (also spelled κράββατος; in  $\chi$  it is usually κράβακτος). It is apparently Macedonian in origin and denotes a campbed, a pallet (cf. Latin grabatus). Moffatt and NIV translate it "mat." MM speaks of it as "the poor man's bed or mattress." It is a late word. Dods comments, "He was commanded to take up his bed that he might recognise that the cure was permanent." ([The Gospel according to John - BORROW](#))

**Vincent** on **pallet** - The pallet ([krabattos](#) different word from Luke's "stretcher" - [klinidion](#) = a small couch). One of Mark's Latin words, grabatus, and condemned by the grammarians as inelegant. A rude pallet, merely a thickly padded quilt or mat, held at the corners, and requiring no cords to let it down. They could easily reach the roof by the steps on the outside, as the roof is low (**Ed**: some say only 6 feet); or they could have gone into an adjoining house and passed along the roofs. Some suppose that the crowd was assembled in an upper chamber, which sometimes extended over the whole area of the house. It is not possible accurately to reproduce the details of the scene. Dr. Thomson says that Jesus probably stood in the lewan or reception-room, a hall which is entered from the court or street by an open arch; or he may have taken his stand in the covered court in front of the house itself, which usually has open arches on three sides, and the crowd was around and in front of him.

**Krabattos** - 11v - Mk. 2:4; Mk. 2:9; Mk. 2:11; Mk. 2:12; Mk. 6:55; Jn. 5:8; Jn. 5:9; Jn. 5:10; Jn. 5:11; Acts 5:15; Acts 9:33

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**C H Spurgeon - Morning and Evening** - Like many others, the impotent man had been waiting for a wonder to be wrought, and a sign to be given. Wearily did he watch the pool, but no angel came, or came not for him; yet, thinking it to be his only chance, he waited still, and knew not that there was One near him whose word could heal him in a moment. Many are in the same plight: they are waiting for some singular emotion, remarkable impression, or celestial vision; they wait in vain and watch for nought. Even supposing that, in a few cases, remarkable signs are seen, yet these are rare, and no man has a right to look for them in his own case; no man especially who feels his impotency to avail himself of the moving of the water even if it came. It is a very sad reflection that tens of thousands are now waiting in the use of means, and ordinances, and vows, and resolutions, and have so waited time out of mind, in vain, utterly in vain. Meanwhile these poor souls forget the present Saviour, who bids them look unto him and be saved. He could heal them at once, but they prefer to wait for an angel and a wonder. To trust him is the sure way to every blessing, and he is worthy of the most implicit confidence; but unbelief makes them prefer the cold porches of Bethesda to the warm bosom of his love. O that the Lord may turn his eye upon the multitudes who are in this case to-night; may he forgive the slights which they put upon his divine power, and call them by that sweet constraining voice, to rise from the bed of despair, and in the energy of faith take up their bed and walk. O Lord, hear our prayer for all such at this calm hour of sunset, and ere the day breaketh may they look and live.

Courteous reader, is there anything in this portion for you?

**John 5:9 Immediately the man became well, and picked up his pallet and began to walk. Now it was the Sabbath on that day.**

BGT John 5:9 κα εθ ως γ νετο γι ς νθρωπος κα ρεν τ ν κρ βαπτον α το κα περιεπ τει. ν δ σ βατον ν κε ν τ μ ρ .

KJV John 5:9 And immediately the man was made whole, and took up his bed, and walked: and on the same day was the sabbath.

NET John 5:9 Immediately the man was healed, and he picked up his mat and started walking. (Now that day was a Sabbath.)

CSB John 5:9 Instantly the man got well, picked up his mat, and started to walk. Now that day was the Sabbath,

ESV John 5:9 And at once the man was healed, and he took up his bed and walked. Now that day was the Sabbath.

NIV John 5:9 At once the man was cured; he picked up his mat and walked. The day on which this took place was a Sabbath,

NLT John 5:9 Instantly, the man was healed! He rolled up his sleeping mat and began walking! But this miracle happened on the Sabbath,

- **immediately:** Jn 5:14 Mk 1:31,42 5:29,41,42 10:52 Ac 3:7,8
- **Now it was the Sabbath:** Jn 5:10-12 Jn 7:23 Jn 9:14 Mt 12:10-13 Mk 3:2-4 Lu 13:10-16 Lev. 20:10; Jer. 17:19-27; Neh. 13:15
- [John 5 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passages:

Matthew 12:1+ At that time Jesus went through the grainfields on the Sabbath, and His disciples became hungry and began to pick the heads of grain and eat.

Matthew 12:10-13+ And a man was there whose hand was withered. And they questioned Jesus, asking, "Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath?"—so that they might accuse Him. 11 And He said to them, "What man is there among you who has a sheep, and if it falls into a pit on the Sabbath, will he not take hold of it and lift it out? 12 "How much more valuable then is a man than a sheep! So then, it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath." 13 Then He \*said to the man, "Stretch out your hand!" He stretched it out, and it was restored to normal, like the other.

Mark 3:2-4+ They were watching Him to see if He would heal him on the Sabbath, so that they might accuse Him. 3He \*said to the man with the withered hand, "Get up and come forward!" 4 And He \*said to them, "Is it

lawful to do good or to do harm on the Sabbath, to save a life or to kill?" But they kept silent.

Luke 6:5+ And He was saying to them, "The Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath."

Luke 6:9+ And Jesus said to them, "I ask you, is it lawful to do good or to do harm on the Sabbath, to save a life or to destroy it?"

Isaiah 35:5-6+ (WHEN MESSIAH CAME) Then the eyes of the blind will be opened And the ears of the deaf will be unstopped. 6 Then the lame will leap like a deer, And the tongue of the mute will shout for joy. For waters will break forth in the wilderness And streams in the Arabah.

Matthew 15:9 'BUT IN VAIN DO THEY WORSHIP ME, TEACHING AS DOCTRINES THE PRECEPTS OF MEN.'

Isa. 35:5-6+ (IN THE MILLENNIUM) Then the eyes of the blind will be opened And the ears of the deaf will be unstopped. 6 **Then the lame will leap like a deer**, And the tongue of the mute will shout for joy. For waters will break forth in the wilderness And streams in the Arabah.

### **THIRD SIGN: A WALKING MIRACLE!**

**Immediately** ([euthesos](#)) - This time phrase is important. Instantly the man was healed completely. When Jesus healed, it was not a process but a pronouncement (so to speak - pun intended). The cure was instantaneous and complete. He was completely cured in a moment. This miraculous sign was the third recorded by John.

Recall that the prophet Isaiah had predicted some 700 years before that when Messiah came He would heal the blind, deaf, lame, mute (Isa. 35:5-6+) and this man's healing was living proof for all the Jews to see that the Messiah had arrived in Israel! John Walvoord writes that "*here in Jerusalem was a public sign that the Messiah had come.*" The Jews (for the most part) simply did not have spiritual eyes to see Him and in fact this miracle would trigger a rising tide of resentment which would culminate in the Cross (See [MacArthur's analysis](#) of John 5:1-7:52).

**MacArthur** - This incident perfectly illustrates God's sovereign grace in action (cf. Jn 5:21). Out of all the sick people at the pool, Jesus chose to heal this man. There was nothing about him that made him more deserving than the others, nor did he seek out Jesus; Jesus approached him. The Lord did not choose him because He foresaw that he had the faith to believe for a healing; he never did express belief that Jesus could heal him. So it is in salvation. Out of the spiritually dead multitude of Adam's fallen race, God chose and redeemed His elect—not because of anything they did to deserve it, or because of their foreseen faith, but because of His sovereign choice (Jn 6:37; Rom. 8:29–30; 9:16; Eph. 1:4–5; 2:4–5; 2 Thess. 2:13; Titus 3:5). Even the faith to believe was a sovereign gift (Eph. 2:8–9).

**The man became well** ([hugies](#)), **and picked up his pallet and began to walk** - It is notable that the man obeyed Jesus' commands! This would indicate that in some way or measure this man had some element of trust (of course in the mysterious ways of God, any faith he possessed would have come from God! Go figure that one out!) He believed this stranger's words and he acted on (obeyed) those words. He reminds me of Peter who obeyed Jesus' command to "**Come!**" and for a moment he walked on the water (Mt 14:29). The question that arises is this -- Does the fact that the man acted on Jesus' words make him believer, a new creation in Christ? See comments below.

As an aside the verb **became** (ginomai) is first used in the Septuagint in God's charge "Let there be (ginomai) light!" (Ge 1:3+ and is used 22x in the Creation account underscoring that this healing was analogous to God's Word in creation.)

**THOUGHT BY SPURGEON** - Now the way in which Christ worked was very singular. He worked by a command. It is not a way that you and I would have selected; nor a way of which some nominal Christians approve. He said to this man, "Rise." He could not rise. "Take up thy bed." He could not take up his bed; he had been thirty-eight years unable to get off his bed. "Take up thy bed, and walk." Walk? He could not walk. I have heard some objectors say, "That preacher says to people, 'Believe.' They cannot believe. He bids them 'Repent.' They cannot repent." Ah! well, our Lord is our example; and he said to this man, who could not rise, and could not take up his bed, and could not walk, "Rise, take up thy bed, and walk." That was his way of exercising his divine power; and that is the way in which Christ saves men to-day. He gives us faith enough to say, "Ye dry bones, hear the Word of the Lord!" They cannot hear. "Thus saith the Lord, Ye dry bones, live!" They cannot live; but they do hear, and they do live; and while we are acting by faith, delivering a command which looks, upon the surface of it, to be absurd and unreasonable, the work of Christ is done by that command. Did he not say of old in the darkness, "Let there be light"? To what spake the Lord that word of



power? To darkness, and to nothingness. "And there was light." Now, he speaks to the sinner, and he says, "Believe, and live." He believes, and he lives. God wants those of his messengers, who have the faith to give his command, to let the sinner know that he has not the strength to obey, that he is morally lost and ruined, and yet to say, in the name of the eternal God, "Thus saith the Lord, Rise, take up thy bed, and walk. Believe, repent, be converted, and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ." This is the way in which Christ's power goes forth to the sons of men. He said to the man with the withered hand, "Stretch forth thine hand," and he did so; and he says to the dead, "Come forth," and they do come forth. His commandings are attended with enablings; and where his commands are faithfully preached, his power goes with them, and men are saved.

**Spurgeon** comments "I pray you observe, that although nothing is said about faith in the text, yet the man must have had faith. Suppose you had been unable to move hand or foot for thirty-eight years, and someone said at your bedside, "Rise!" you would not think of trying to rise, you would know it to be impossible; you must have faith in the person who uttered the word, or else you would not make the attempt (**ED: YES IF SOMEONE TELLS YOU TO SIT ON THAT CHAIR, YOU HAVE TO BELIEVE IT WILL HOLD YOU, BUT THIS DOES IN NO WAY SUGGEST THAT THIS MAN HAD FAITH THAT RESULTS IN REGENERATION, FOR HE DID NOT EVEN KNOW WHO JESUS WAS**). I think I see the poor man—there he is, a heap, a writhing bundle of tortured nerves and powerless muscles; yet Jesus says, "Rise!" and up he rises in moment. "Take up thy bed," says the Master, and the bed is carried. Here was the man's faith. The man was a Jew, and he knew that, according to the Pharisees, it would be a very wicked thing for him to roll up his mattress and carry it on the Sabbath; but because Jesus told him, he asked no questions, but doubled up his couch, and walked. He did what he was told to do, because he believed in him who spake. Have you such faith in Jesus, poor sinner? (**ED: NOTICE WHILE THIS IS A POSSIBLE APPLICATION, THE MAN HIMSELF DID NOT HAVE FAITH IN JESUS WHO WAS UNKNOWN TO HIM**). ([Jesus at Bethesda](#))

**Guzik** agrees with Spurgeon writing "Immediately the man was made well: This happened as the man responded in faith and did exactly what Jesus told him to do, though a moment before this it was impossible to do it."([John 5 Commentary](#))

I agree with **Leon Morris** who has this comment on **faith** - This healing differs from many others in that, not only is **there no mention of faith on the part of the man**, but there seems to be no room for it. **He did not even know Jesus' name** (Jn 5:13). This healing differs from many others in that, not only is there no mention of faith on the part of the man, but there seems to be no room for it. He did not even know Jesus' name ([The Gospel according to John - BORROW](#))

**J Ramsey Michaels** - Jesus knows that he truly wants to "get well," and he grants his wish unreservedly, with no requirement, or even any mention, of "faith" (contrast Jn 4:50, 53; also Mk 2:5). (Borrow [The Gospel of John](#))

**Colin Kruse** - Ignoring **the man's lack of faith** Jesus said to him, 'Get up! Pick up your mat and walk.' The very thing the man was unable to do, Jesus commanded him to do. **With the command went forth the healing power.** (**ED: AXIOMATIC POINT - GOD'S COMMANDMENTS INCLUDE HIS ENABLEMENTS!**) At once the man was cured; he picked up his mat and walked. Jesus' word of command to the invalid was like the creative word of God: the word was uttered and the deed was done.....**This is one of those healing miracles which Jesus performed without any sign of faith on the part of the beneficiary** (cf. Mark 2:1–5; Luke 22:49–51). (Borrow [The Gospel according to John : an introduction and commentary](#))

**Warren Wiersbe** has a more middle of the road comment - It is not easy to understand the relationship between this man and Jesus. **There is no evidence that he believed on Christ and was converted** yet we cannot say that he was opposed to the Saviour. In fact, he did not even know who it was that healed him until Jesus met him in the temple. No doubt the man went there to give thanks to God and to offer the appropriate sacrifices. It seems strange that the man did not actively seek a closer relationship with the One who healed him (**ED: IN FACT WHO GOES TO REPORT HIM TO THE JEWS!!!**), but more than one person has gratefully accepted the gift and ignored the Giver. ([Bible Exposition Commentary](#))

**Henry Morris - made well** - This is the third of the great creation miracles described by John. A man hopelessly crippled for thirty-eight years (John 5:5) who suddenly had perfectly sound limbs can be explained only in terms of the creative power of God Himself. It should have been a mighty testimony to the Jewish leaders of His deity but instead they complained because He did it on the Sabbath (**ED: THERE IS A TOUCH OF IRONY HERE FOR WHEN JESUS CREATED IN Ge 2:1-3 WE SEE HE RESTED ON THE SEVENTH DAY, THE SABBATH, BUT HERE HE "CREATES" ON THE SEVENTH DAY!** **J Vernon McGee** quipped "*When that man got down into the ditch of sin, the Lord Jesus and the Father could no longer rest on the Sabbath Day. Although God rested after the creation of the physical universe, after the fall of man He didn't rest, because man, like an ox, had gotten down into the ditch.*") (Borrow [The Defender's Study Bible](#))

**THOUGHT BY SPURGEON** - In obedience, power was given. The man did not stop and wrangle with Christ, and say, "Rise? What dost thou mean? Thou lookest like a friend; but dost thou come here to make sport of me? Rise? Thirty and eight years have I been lying here, and thou sayest, 'Rise.' Dost thou think that there has



over been a minute in those eight and thirty years in which I would not have gladly risen if I could have done so, and yet thou sayest, 'Rise,' and thou sayest, 'Take up thy bed. Shoulder the rug on which thou liest.' How can I do so? It is thirty and eight years since I could lift a pound weight, and thou bidst me shoulder this mat on which I lie. Dost thou make me a theme of jest? And walk? Thou sayest, 'Walk.' Walk? Hear me, ye sick ones around me, he tells me to walk! I can scarcely lift even a finger, yet he bids me walk!" Thus he might have argued the matter out, and it would have been a very logical piece of argument, and the Saviour would have stood convicted of having spoken empty words. Instead of speaking thus, no sooner did Christ say to him, "Rise," than he willed to rise; and as he willed to rise, he moved to rise, and rise he did, to his own astonishment. He rose, and stooping down, rolled up his mattress, all the while filled with wonder, every part of his body singing as he rolled it up, and put it on his shoulder with alacrity. To his surprise, he found that the joints of his feet and legs could move, and he walked right away with his mattress on his shoulder; and the miracle was complete. Stop, man, stop! Come here! Now, had you the strength to do this of yourself? "No, not I. I lay there eight and thirty years; I had no strength till that word 'Rise,' came to me." "But did you do it?" "Oh! yes, you see that I did it. I rose; I folded up the mattress; and I walked away." "But you were under some kind of compulsion, that made you move your legs and your hands, were you not?" "Oh! no; I did it freely, cheerfully, gladly. Compel me to do it? My dear sir, I clap my hands for joy to think that I could do it. I do not want to go back to that old mat, and lie there again; not I." "Then what did you do?" "Well, I scarcely know what I did. I believed him, and I did what he told me; and a strange, mysterious power came over me; that is the whole story." "Now explain it; tell these people all about it." "Oh! no," says the man, "I know that it is so; but I cannot explain it. One thing I know, whereas I was a cripple, now I can walk; whereas I was impotent, now I can carry my bed; whereas I was lying there, now I can stand upright."

### JESUS' DELIBERATE TIMING OF THE MIRACLE

**Now it was the Sabbath ([sabbaton](#)) on that day** - John adds this parenthetical note to help us understand the subsequent fleshly reaction of the Jews (See [the inception of persecution in chart above](#)). Jesus clearly performed many of his miracles on the Sabbath to directly confront the Jewish tradition that such activity on the Sabbath made one guilty of breaking God's Law. The problem of course is that the Jews had added to God's Law. (See [Table of Sabbath Miracles](#)) This miracle on the Sabbath is one among a number of Sabbath skirmishes between Jesus and the Jewish leaders - Matt. 12:1-14; Mark 2:23-3:6; Luke 6:1-11; 13:10-17; 14:1-6; John 7:21-23; John 9:14-16.

**Robertson on the Sabbath ([sabbaton](#)) on that day** - The first of the violations of the Sabbath rules of the Jews by Jesus in Jerusalem that led to so much bitterness (cf. John 9:14, 16). This controversy will spread to Galilee on Christ's return there (Mark 2:23-3:6; Matthew 12:1-14; Luke 6:1-11). ([John 5 Commentary](#))

**David Thompson** - Jesus will heal people at least seven times on the Sabbath day: 1) Heals demon possessed man (Mark 1:21-28); 2) Heals Peter's mother-in-law (Mark 1:29-31); 3) Heals the lame man (John 5:1-18); 4) Heals shriveled man's hand (Mark 3:1-6); 5) Heals a crippled woman (Luke 13:10-17); 6) Heals a man with dropsy (Luke 14:1-6); 7) Heals a blind man (John 9:13-14). Jesus specifically chose to do this miracle on the Sabbath day and He knew this would rub these religious leaders the wrong way. Under the O.T. law, there were some Sabbath Day restrictions for Israel as a nation - 1) They were not to cook anything (Ex. 16:23); 2) They were not to gather manna (Ex. 16:26); 3) They were not to go anyplace (Ex. 16:29); 4) They were not to do any kind of work (Ex. 35:2); 5) They were not to light a fire (Ex. 35:3); 6) They were not to gather sticks (Num. 15:32-35); 7) They were not to carry a load or bring anything into Jerusalem (Jer. 17:21); 8) They were not to load things on donkeys (Neh. 13:15). The point of these Sabbath day rules was that this was to be a day in which the focus was on God and not on the normal business procedures of every other day.

**Charles Swindoll** quips "Just as the reader might begin to celebrate the man's healing, John's aside drops like a wet blanket. He says, in effect, "Oh, by the way, it was the Sabbath." Anyone who knew anything about Pharisees understood the significance of that simple statement. His literary killjoy foreshadows a bizarre twist to the story. (BORROW [Insights on John](#) or see [Insights on John](#) scroll up and down for more text)

**John MacArthur** writes "Jesus' refusal to observe the legalistic and manmade Sabbath regulations of rabbinic tradition was a major point of contention between Him and Israel's religious establishment (cf. Matt. 12:1-14; Mark 2:23-3:6; Luke 6:1-11; 13:10-17; 14:1-6; John 7:21-23; 9:14-16). In fact, the Lord deliberately chose to heal this man on the Sabbath to confront superficial and bankrupt Jewish legalism. The man's condition was not life threatening, and he was constantly at the pool. Jesus could have easily chosen another day to heal him. But the Lord not only wanted to show mercy to this man; He also wanted to call the nation to repentance by confronting the self-righteous and unbiblical stipulations that led to their illusion of spiritual life. They had become experts at

substituting their traditions for God's commands (Matt. 15:9).

**Gerald L. Borchert** explains that "The Sabbath had become a pervading theme in Jewish life....So significant was the Sabbath that a major section of the [Mishna](#) was devoted to Sabbath rules. Sabbath obedience became in fact an eschatological issue because it was thought at least minimally that the coming of the Messiah was linked to the perfect keeping of one Sabbath. The actions of Jesus were thus regarded by Sabbath-oriented Jews as being diametrically opposed to the expectations of the rabbis who probably would have categorized Jesus as an antinomian libertarian. He did not seem to be concerned for the precious rules of the rabbis. Not only in John, but also in the Synoptics is Jesus portrayed as seemingly unconcerned for the rabbinic traditions about the Sabbath.... The rules of the rabbis were a misunderstanding of God's design for the Sabbath. The Sabbath was not the means to God's approval, as the rabbis seem to have suggested. The Sabbath was not merely a rule for humans, but a *gift to humans* (cf. Mark 2:27). It was to be used to honor God and to benefit his people. More importantly, Jesus was Lord of the Sabbath (cf. Mark 2:28). If, therefore, anyone would have a right to act on Sabbath, it was Jesus. (John 1–11, The New American Commentary [Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2002], 228–29. Italics in original. (Quoted by John MacArthur - [An Ungrateful Response to Jesus](#))

**Immediately**" (2112) ([eutheos](#) from [euthus](#) = straight, immediate) is an adverb which generally means at once, right away, forthwith, straightaway, without an interval of time or a point of time subsequent to a previous point of time. Note that the actual interval of time depends on the nature of the events and the manner in which the sequence is interpreted by the writer. **Eutheos** is a "time sensitive" word (see [expression of time](#)) and should prompt questions like "To what time does it refer?" or "What happens in this time?"

**John 5:10 So the Jews were saying to the man who was cured, "It is the Sabbath, and it is not permissible for you to carry your pallet."**

BGT John 5:10 λεγον ο ν ο ουδα οι τ τεθεραπειμ ν · σ ββατ ν στιν, κα ο κ ξεστ ν σοι ραι τ ν κρ βαττ ν σου.

KJV John 5:10 The Jews therefore said unto him that was cured, It is the sabbath day: it is not lawful for thee to carry thy bed.

NET John 5:10 So the Jewish leaders said to the man who had been healed, "It is the Sabbath, and you are not permitted to carry your mat."

CSB John 5:10 so the Jews said to the man who had been healed, "This is the Sabbath! It's illegal for you to pick up your mat."

ESV John 5:10 So the Jews said to the man who had been healed, "It is the Sabbath, and it is not lawful for you to take up your bed."

NIV John 5:10 and so the Jews said to the man who had been healed, "It is the Sabbath; the law forbids you to carry your mat."

NLT John 5:10 so the Jewish leaders objected. They said to the man who was cured, "You can't work on the Sabbath! The law doesn't allow you to carry that sleeping mat!"

- **it is not:** Ex 20:8-11 Ex 31:12-17 Ne 13:15-21 Isa 58:13 Jer 17:21,27 Mt 12:2-8 Mk 2:24 3:4 Lu 6:2 13:14 23:56
- [John 5 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passages:

Exodus 16:30+ So the people **rested** ([shabath](#) root of the noun "Sabbath") on the seventh day.

Exodus 20:8-11+ "**Remember** ([aorist imperative](#) in the Lxx) the sabbath day, to keep it holy. 9 "Six days you shall labor and do all your work, 10 but the seventh day is a sabbath of the LORD your God; in it you shall not do any work, you or your son or your daughter, your male or your female servant or your cattle or your sojourner who stays with you. 11 "For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea and all that is in them, and rested ([nuach](#); Lxx = [katapauo](#) = bring to a place of rest, cease) on the seventh day; therefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day and made it holy.

Exodus 31:12-17+ The LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 13 "But as for you, speak to the sons of Israel, saying, 'You shall surely observe My sabbaths; for this is a sign between Me and you throughout your generations,

that you may know that I am the LORD who sanctifies you. 14 'Therefore you are to observe the sabbath, for it is holy to you. Everyone who profanes it shall surely be put to death; for whoever does any work on it, that person shall be cut off from among his people. 15 **'For six days work may be done, but on the seventh day there is a sabbath of complete rest, holy to the LORD; whoever does any work on the sabbath day shall surely be put to death.** 16 'So the sons of Israel shall observe the sabbath, to celebrate the sabbath throughout their generations as a perpetual covenant.' 17 "It is a sign between Me and the sons of Israel forever; for in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, but on the seventh day He **ceased** ([shabath](#) root of the noun "Sabbath"; Lxx = [pauo](#) = cause something to stop) from labor, and was **refreshed** (Hebrew = naphash = Literally "take a breath" figuratively "be refreshed" - cease from activity resulting in rest and refreshment from a weary state; Lxx = [katapauo](#) = bring to a place of rest, cease)."

Genesis 2:1-3+ Thus the heavens and the earth were completed, and all their hosts. 2 By the **seventh day** God completed His work which He had done, and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had done. 3 Then God **blessed the seventh day and sanctified it**, because in it He rested ([shabath](#) root of the noun "Sabbath"; Lxx = [katapauo](#) = bring to a place of rest, cease) from all His work which God had created and made.

Numbers 15:32-36+ Now while the sons of Israel were in the wilderness, they found a man gathering wood on the sabbath day. 33 Those who found him gathering wood brought him to Moses and Aaron and to all the congregation; 34 and they put him in custody because it had not been declared what should be done to him. 35 Then the LORD said to Moses, **"The man shall surely be put to death; all the congregation shall stone him with stones outside the camp."** 36 **So all the congregation brought him outside the camp and stoned him to death with stones, just as the LORD had commanded Moses.**

## **NO "FURNITURE" COULD BE CARRIED ON SABBATH!**

**So** - For this reason. Term of conclusion. What was the healed man doing? He was carrying his pallet, which led to their concluding statement.

**Warren Wiersbe** - The scribes had listed thirty-nine tasks that were prohibited on the Sabbath, and carrying a burden was one of them. Instead of rejoicing at the wonderful deliverance of the man, the religious leaders condemned him for carrying his bed and thereby breaking the law. ([Bible Exposition Commentary](#)) (ED: Someone has written that prohibition against bearing a burden even included one could not wear a wooden leg or even false teeth!)

**The Jews** ([Ioudaios](#)) **were saying to the man who was cured** ([therapeuo](#) in perfect tense - lasting effect), **"It is the Sabbath** ([sabbaton](#)), **and it is not** (ouk = absolutely not) **permissible** (lawful - [exesti](#)) **for you to carry your pallet."** -The **Jews** here are not Jews in general but those leading Jews in opposition to Jesus, the "religious authorities." **Were saying** is in the picturesque imperfect tense (over and over, again and again), depicting the [Jewish authorities](#), one after another, saying "Sabbath! Sabbath! Sabbath! No! No! No!" The Law of Moses said nothing about forbidding carrying something like his bedroll, but the tradition of the Jews made it strictly forbidden! As was typical of legalism, they focused on the letter of the Law (but even then superimposed ungodly hair-splitting distinctions and rabbinical restrictions) and missed the spirit of the Law! These religious experts may have had Jeremiah 17:21 in mind for it says *"Thus says the LORD, "Take heed for yourselves, and **do not carry any load on the sabbath day or bring anything in through the gates of Jerusalem.**"* If so, they took the passage out of context for Jeremiah was accusing the Jews of treating the sabbath as a regular business day, like any other day of the week. (Cf Neh 13:19). For the Pharisees the Sabbath was a day of idleness, but for the Lord it was a day of work, that He might do the work of His Father Who sent Him (John 5:17, 30, 36; 6:38; 8:29; cf. Ps. 40:8; Isa. 61:1-3; Mt. 3:15; Jn 4:34).

**Robertson on to carry your pallet** - Carrying burdens was considered unlawful on the Sabbath (Exodus 23:12; Neh. 13:19; Jeremiah 17:21). Stoning was the rabbinical punishment. The healing of the man was a minor detail. ([John 5 Commentary](#))

Read some of the ridiculous teachings of the [Mishnah, Shabbat 7.2](#).

*They had taken the Sabbath—God's gift to man—  
and had transformed it into a prison house of regulations and restrictions*

**Warren Wiersbe** - Jesus had healed a demoniac on the Sabbath (Luke 4:31-37+), so the Sanhedrin was already suspicious. In the days following the miracle recorded in John 5, Jesus would defend His disciples for picking grain on the Sabbath (Matt. 12:1-8+), and would heal a man's withered hand on the Sabbath (Matt. 12:9-14). **He deliberately challenged the legalistic traditions of the scribes and Pharisees.** They had taken the Sabbath—God's gift to man—and had transformed it into a prison house of regulations

and restrictions. ([Bible Exposition Commentary](#))

**John MacArthur** - The false religion of Judaism, like all false systems, cannot change the inside, so it is left to manipulate life on the outside.

Jesus sums up the real meaning of the Sabbath in Mark 2:27NLT+ "Then Jesus said to them, "The Sabbath was made to **meet the needs of people**, and not people to meet the requirements of the Sabbath."

Why was this not **permissible** (lawful - [exesti](#))? It was seen as carrying "furniture" which in the perverted minds of the legalistic rabbis was interpreted as work and thus they felt he had broken the command to "**Remember** (idea is to set aside - Lxx is in the [aorist imperative](#) - "Just do it!") the sabbath day, to keep it holy (Ex 20:8-)." The command to **remember** included the mental activity of recalling and pondering as well as the consequent actions that result from remembering. As an aside, it is notable that the New Testament repeats injunctions concerning all of the other of the ten commandments, but there is no repeated injunction to keep the Sabbath.

*Jesus healed on the Sabbath*

*in order to reveal the hypocrisy of the [Pharisees'](#) religion.*

-- [GotQuestions.org](#)

**Charles Swindoll** "The Lord instituted the Sabbath as a gift. He ordered a day of rest to rejuvenate the bodies and minds of His people. More importantly, it was given in order to break the day-in, day-out cycle of routine so that people would not forget that God is the ultimate source of their sustenance; their labors are but a means of His provision. The Sabbath gave people permission to stop work so they would not neglect a vital need: worship. We are created for worship; therefore, worship is good for us. But the Pharisees turned this wonderful gift of God into a burden, an occasion for severe criticism, an excuse to exercise power, and yet another opportunity to remind themselves and everyone else of their superior moral worth. (BORROW [Insights on John](#) or see [Insights on John](#) scroll up and down for more text)

**POSB** has a good note -1. **Dead religion is a religion of legalism** The religionists were trying to meet the needs of people through rules and regulations, ceremony and rituals. (See Deeper Study #1—Luke 6:2; Deeper Study #2—John 5:15-16.) They were more concerned with the man who was violating the ritual of the Sabbath than with the man who was suffering in a pitiful condition.

**2. Dead religion is a religion ignorant of true authority.** They should have known that the power of God had healed the man, and should have been eager to share with the man Jesus, the man upon whom such power rested. But note: they cared little about the power of God and His messenger. They cared only that the status quo be maintained, that their religious practices continue as they were and not be violated. Their thoughts were upon their own religious position and security. (See Deeper Study #2—John 5:15-16 for discussion.)

**3. Dead religion is a religion blind to love and good.** Note the question of the religionists. It was not, "*Who is the man who has healed and helped you so much?*" but, "*Who is the man that broke the religious law?*" They did not see the good that had been done. They saw only that their position and security was threatened and that someone had more power and influence and was doing more good than they were. ([The Preacher's outline & sermon Bible](#) - BORROW)

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**ILLUSTRATION OF THE POWER OF LEGALISM** - Chuck Swindoll - [The quintessential legalists of Jesus' day](#) were the Pharisees, a brotherhood of experts in religion. Legalism is an enemy. I declare that not just on the basis of Scripture; I have discovered its spirit-smothering capacity through experience. As a young believer seeking companions to share my spiritual journey, I found myself surrounded by a group of legalists and, without realizing it, I began to embrace their views. I started gauging the quality of my spiritual life and the lives of others by a list of dos and don'ts, measuring everyone's worth in terms of performance and achievement. I wanted to pursue spiritual excellence, but I thought I could do it on my terms, as though righteousness depended completely upon my efforts. Instead of experiencing greater joy in my relationship with Christ, I became critical and judgmental. I gradually turned into a harsh, negative, rigid spirit. Freedom was gone. Worship was flat. Service was drudgery. I didn't realize it at the time, but that environment of legalism was smothering me.

**What is legalism?** - Legalism is the establishment of standards carefully selected by people for the purpose of celebrating human achievement under the guise of pleasing God. Legalism is righteousness as defined by humans, who frequently cite God as the source of the standard. In reality, the standards come from culture, tradition, and most frequently the personal preferences of those who maintain positions of power or influence. Legalism is based on lists (legalists love their lists!). If you do keep every item on the list of dos and don'ts, you're deemed spiritually acceptable. But if you don't follow the prescribed standard, you are judged unworthy of God's favor and others' approval. Naturally, legalists always think they know how God judges and they are more than willing to act on His behalf.

**How does legalism appear?** - Legalism almost always adorns itself in the regal robes of religious garb, and it brandishes the credentials of religious organizations. This is not to condemn Christian organizations or the clothes they wear—I am merely pointing out that legalists are drawn to them and have successfully infiltrated churches, missions, parachurch organizations, charities, and schools. When they do, they use religious trappings to convince others that their own agendas have God's approval. Eventually, followers begin to fear the disapproval of the leaders, who become more and more visible and controlling as the Lord fades into obscurity.

**Why is legalism wrong?** - Legalism denies God's grace and presumes to earn His favor through deeds. It is a man-made righteousness that exalts humanity rather than the Lord. Legalism produces either pride or depression in the people under its spell—pride for those who keep the list to their own satisfaction, depression for those who recognize their utter inability to keep the list perfectly. Criticism is the primary motivation. The goal of legalism is to give as much criticism as possible and to avoid receiving it at all costs. Legalism is wrong because it produces in people what the Lord desires least: pride, self-loathing, hypocrisy, and self-righteousness. (BORROW [Insights on John](#) or see [Insights on John](#) scroll up and down for more text)

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**Colin Kruse** -- The Old Testament forbade work—that is, carrying out one's usual occupation—on the Sabbath. This included bearing loads on the Sabbath:

This is what the LORD says: 'be careful not to carry a load on the Sabbath day or bring it through the gates of Jerusalem. Do not bring a load out of your houses or do any work on the Sabbath, but keep the Sabbath day holy, as I commanded your ancestors.' (Jer. 17:21–22)

Jewish scholars, in their attempts to ensure that the Sabbath law was not broken, defined thirty-nine types of work forbidden on the Sabbath, which are recorded in the Mishnah:

The main classes of work are forty save one: sowing, ploughing, reaping, binding sheaves, threshing, winnowing, cleansing crops, grinding, sifting, kneading, baking, shearing wool, washing or beating or dyeing it, spinning, weaving, making two loops, weaving two threads, separating two threads, tying [a knot], loosening [a knot], sewing two stitches, tearing in order to sew two stitches, hunting a gazelle, slaughtering or flaying or salting it or curing its skin, scraping it or cutting it up, writing two letters, erasing in order to write two letters, building, pulling down, putting out a fire, lighting a fire, striking with a hammer and taking out aught from one domain to another. These are the main classes of work: forty save one. ([m. Sabb. 7:2](#))

What the man was accused of (carrying his mat on the Sabbath) came under the general restriction of taking something 'from one domain to another'. Carrying one's mat through the streets of Jerusalem was certainly a culpable act according to rabbinic law. It is sad to think that the Jewish leaders could not rejoice in the man's healing and only object that it had been carried out on the Sabbath. [Michaels \(borrow\)](#) comments:

From what we know of the Johannine Jesus, we can be sure that nothing he says or does is unintentional. He knew exactly what he was doing, and his command '**Get up, pick up your mat and walk**' was a deliberate challenge to the religious authorities in Jerusalem and their Sabbath laws. (Borrow Colin Kruse's [The Gospel according to John : an introduction and commentary](#))

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**Jewish believer Alfred Edersheim** has a 10 page discussion of '**THE ORDINANCES AND LAW OF THE SABBATH AS LAID DOWN IN THE MISHNAH AND THE JERUSALEM TALMUD**'. (See Book III. ch. xxxv. in vol. ii. p. 52.)

The terribly exaggerated views of the Rabbis, and their endless, burdensome rules about the Sabbath may best be learned from a brief analysis of the Mishnah, as further explained and enlarged in the Jerusalem Talmud.<sup>6476</sup> For this purpose a brief analysis of what is, confessedly, one of the most difficult tractates may here be given. The Mishnic tractate Sabbath stands at the head of twelve tractates which together form the second of the six sections into which the Mishnah is divided, and which treat of Festive Seasons (Seder Moed). Properly to understand the Sabbath regulations, it is, however, necessary also to take into account the second tractate in that section, which treats of what are called 'commixtures' or 'connections' (Erubin). Its object is to make the Sabbath Laws more bearable. For this purpose, it is explained how places, beyond which it would otherwise have been unlawful to carry things, may be connected together, so as, by a legal fiction, to convert them into a sort of private dwelling. Thus, supposing a number of small private houses to open into a common court, it would have been unlawful on the Sabbath to carry anything from one of these houses into the other. This difficulty is removed if all the families deposit before the Sabbath some food in the common court, when 'a connection' is established between the various houses, which makes them one dwelling. This was called the 'Erub of Courts.' Similarly, an extension of what was allowed as a 'Sabbath journey' might be



secured by another 'commixture,' the 'Erubh' or 'connection of boundaries.' An ordinary Sabbath day's journey extended 2,000 cubits beyond one's dwelling.<sup>6477</sup> But if at the boundary of that 'journey' a man deposited on the Friday food for two meals, he thereby constituted it his dwelling, and hence might go on for other 2,000 cubits. Lastly, there was another 'Erubh,' when narrow streets or blind alleys were connected into 'a private dwelling' by laying a beam over the entrance, or extending a wire or rope along such streets and alleyways. This, by a legal fiction, made them 'a private dwelling,' so that everything was lawful there which a man might do on the Sabbath in his own house. ([Click here for the 10 pages of discussion](#) on Sabbath silliness - go to page 1608 in the pdf)

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### Mishnah 7 -

7:1 A A general rule did they state concerning the Sabbath:

I B Whoever forgets the basic principle of the Sabbath and performed many acts of labor on many different Sabbath days is liable only for a single sin offering.

II C He who knows the principle of the Sabbath and performed many acts of labor on many different Sabbaths is liable for the violation of each and every Sabbath.

III D He who knows that it is the Sabbath and performed many acts of labor on many different Sabbaths is liable for the violation of each and every generative category of labor.

E He who performs many acts of labor of a single type is liable only for a single sin offering.

### 7:2 A The generative categories of acts of labor [prohibited on the Sabbath] are forty less one:

B (1) he who sews, (2) ploughs, (3) reaps, (4) binds sheaves, (5) threshes, (6) winnows, (7) selects [fit from unfit produce or crops], (8) grinds, (9) sifts, (10) kneads, (11) bakes;

C (12) he who shears wool, (13) washes it, (14) beats it, (15) dyes it;

D (16) spins, (17) weaves,

E (18) makes two loops, (19) weaves two threads, (20) separates two threads;

F (21) ties, (22) unties,

G (23) sews two stitches, (24) tears in order to sew two stitches;

H (25) he who traps a deer, (26) slaughters it, (27) flays it, (28) salts it, (29) cures its hide, (30) scrapes it, and (31) cuts it up;

I (32) he who writes two letters, (33) erases two letters in order to write two letters;

J (34) he who builds, (35) tears down;

K (36) he who puts out a fire, (37) kindles a fire;

L (38) he who hits with a hammer; (39) he who transports an object from one domain to another—

M lo, these are the forty generative acts of labor less one.

7:3 A And a further general rule did they state:

B Whatever is suitable for storage, which people generally store in such quantity as one has taken out on the Sabbath—

C he is liable to a sin offering on its account.

D And whatever is not suitable for storage, which people generally do not store in such quantity as one has taken out on the Sabbath—

E only he is liable on its account who stores it away [and who then takes it out].

7:4 A He who takes out a quantity of (1) straw sufficient for a cow's mouthful; (2) pea stalks sufficient for a camel's mouthful; (3) ears of grain sufficient for a lamb's mouthful; (4) grass sufficient for a kid's mouthful; (5) garlic or onion leaves, ([if] fresh, a dried fig's bulk), [and if] dry, sufficient for a kid's mouthful—

B [Supply: he is liable,]

C and they do not join together with one another [to form a quantity sufficient for culpability],

D because they are not subject to equivalent measures.

E He who takes out foodstuffs [for a human being] in the volume of a dried fig is liable.

F And they do join together with one another [to form a quantity sufficient for culpability],

G because they are subject to equivalent measures,

H except for their (1) husks, (2) kernels, (3) stalks, (4) coarse bran, and (5) fine bran.

I R. Judah says, "Except for the husks of lentils, which are cooked with them."

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**Cured** (healed) ([2323](#)) [therapeuo](#) from **therapon** = an attendant, servant) means primarily to care for, to wait upon, minister to. It has two main senses in the NT, one speaking of rendering service (Acts 17:25) and the more common use describing medical aspects such as to take care of the sick, to heal, to cure (Matt. 4:24; 12:10; Mark 1:34; Luke 6:7; 10:9), to recover health, to restore.



Therapeúō means to heal miraculously in Matt. 4:23, 24; 10:1, 8; Acts 4:14. Providing care to improve a situation.

**Sabbath** (4521) **sabbaton** (SEE MUCH LONGER "DEFINITION") from **shabath** - 07676 = to cease from work, intermission - see note on **shabath**) has two main meanings: (1) **Sabbath**, the seventh day of the week, held sacred by the Jews and (2) **week**. The **Sabbath** was a sign between the Lord and the nation of Israel—the sign of the Old Covenant (the Law)—that they might know He is the Lord Who sanctifies them, sets them apart. Israel was to observe the **Sabbath** because it was holy, set apart, for them. The one who profaned the **Sabbath**, did not treat it as holy, was put to death. The **Sabbath**, the seventh day, was to be a day of complete rest. Israel was to keep it throughout their generations as a perpetual covenant. But after the captivity arose the school of the Pharisees, and by them the attractive (positive) character of the Sabbatical observances was destroyed. In place of the joy, they imposed upon the people the yoke of a scrupulous, slavish sabbatarianism which made the Sabbath an END instead of a MEANS, hampered the spirit of true worship, and laid greater stress upon a punctilious obedience to mere human regulations than upon God's commands in the Law. **Some of their ridiculous Sabbath prohibitions included:** walking in the grass on the Sabbath because its bruising effect would constitute a kind of *threshing*; wearing nailed shoes because they would be viewed as *carrying a burden*. It was against this absurd perversion of the commandment that the Lord Jesus protested. He refused to sanction Pharisaical legalism and vigorously defended His Sabbath miracles (see table below). Jesus kept the **Sabbath** in the highest sense of the term. He observed every **jot and tittle** of the Mosaic Law in the freedom of the spirit. He taught us that acts of necessity and mercy are to be performed always (as in this story in Lk 13:10-17), even on the **Sabbath**, and worldly occupations are to be put as far as possible out of our thoughts. In the Christian church the first day of the week (Sunday) has been substituted for the last day (Saturday) as a day of worship and rest. This, however, is in commemoration of the resurrection of Christ. Christians are to do what the New Testament says. Jesus fulfilled the ceremonial, sacrificial part of the Old Testament law when He died on the cross (Hebrews 10:7-10). He told Peter that the dietary laws no longer applied to the church (Acts 10). True believers keep the moral part of God's laws as they live by His Spirit (Ro 8:1ff -see [notes](#))

**Permissible** (lawful, permitted) (1832) **exesti** from from **ek** = out + **eimí** = to be) is an impersonal verb, signifying "it is permitted, it is lawful" (or interrogatively, "is it lawful?"). **Exesti** occurs most frequently in the synoptic Gospels and the Acts, especially in Jesus' conflicts with the Pharisees over His actions (and those of His disciples) on the Sabbath (Matt. 12:2; 12:4; 12:10; 12:12, etc).

**BDAG** - 1. to be authorized for the doing of something - it is right, is authorized, is permitted, is proper. 2. to be within the range of possibility, it is possible (Acts 2:29)

**Friberg** notes **exesti** is an impersonal verb; (1) as denoting that there are no hindrances to an action or that the opportunity for it occurs it is possible, followed by an infinitive ( Acts 2.29); (2) predominantly as denoting that an action is not prevented by a higher court or by law it is permitted, it is lawful, it may be done (Mk 10.2) (Borrow [Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament](#))

**TDNT** on **exesti** - "It is free," denoting a. an action that is possible because there is occasion for it or no obstacle to it, b. an action that is not prevented by a higher norm or court, and c. an action to which there is no psychological or ethical block. In the NT the term mostly refers to God's law or will with its specific demands, especially the OT law.

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#### SEVEN SABBATH MIRACLES

Jesus sends a demon out of a man	Mark 1:21-28+
Jesus heals Peter's mother-in-law	Mark 1:29-31+
Jesus heals a lame man by the pool of Bethesda	John 5:1-18+
Jesus heals a man with a deformed hand	Mark 3:1-6+
Jesus restores a crippled woman	Luke 13:10-17+
Jesus heals a man with swollen arms and legs	Luke 14:1-6+
Jesus heals a man born blind	John 9:1-16

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QUESTION - [Why did Jesus heal on the Sabbath?](#)

**ANSWER** - The gospels record several occasions when Jesus performed a healing on the [Sabbath day](#). In most of those instances, the healing was followed by a confrontation with the religious leaders (Mark 3:1–6, Luke 6:6–10; 13:10–17; 14:1–6; John 5:1–18). In another passage, Luke 4:38–41, Jesus heals after teaching in the synagogue on the Sabbath, but no confrontation is recorded, as the miracle was performed in a private home. Jesus knew the Pharisees' rules regarding the Sabbath, so why did He choose to heal on that day?

**It is important to note that Jesus was not violating the law of God when He healed on the Sabbath** He was surely acting against the Pharisaical *interpretation* of the law and against their particular rules. But the Holy One of God, who came to fulfill the law (Matthew 5:17), did not violate the law.

The basic reason that Jesus healed on the Sabbath was that people needed His help. Need knows no calendar.

Jesus healed on the Sabbath in order to reveal the hypocrisy of the [Pharisees'](#) religion.

In three passages where Jesus' healing led to a confrontation, Jesus references how the Jews "worked" on the Sabbath by taking care of their animals, and that work was sanctioned by the Pharisees. In an agrarian society, animal care was a major part of a normal day. Jesus points out their willingness to work on the Sabbath to help an animal: "Doesn't each of you on the Sabbath untie your ox or donkey from the stall and lead it out to give it water?" (Luke 13:15+), and He rightly calls out their hypocrisy for denying aid to "a daughter of Abraham" (Lk 13:16+). If your religious rules allow for helping animals on the Sabbath, then it should definitely allow for helping people.

**When Jesus healed on the Sabbath, He was also challenging the religious leaders with the question of doing good or evil on the Sabbath: "Which is lawful on the Sabbath: to do good or to do evil, to save life or to kill?"**(Mark 3:4+). The leaders remained silent and refused to answer. His healing gave them the answer. Doing good and saving life is lawful, even on the Sabbath. Using the Sabbath rule to do evil or to kill is an ungodly perversion of the law.

Let's take a look at the law in question. The [Torah](#) is the law proper. But the Pharisees also added their traditions to the law God had given. The religious leaders' traditions that they combined with the biblical law became as important to them as God's actual Word. Jesus stood against such additions to the law, rebuking the teachers of the law for "teaching as doctrines the commandments of men" (Mark 7:7ESV).

The Pharisees' Sabbath restrictions forbade the following activities: writing, erasing, and tearing; conducting business transactions; shopping; cooking, baking, or kindling a fire; gardening; doing laundry; carrying anything for more than six feet in a public area; moving anything with your hand, even indirectly (with a broom): a broken bowl, flowers in a vase, candles on a table, raw food, a rock, a button that has fallen off (you could move things with your elbow or your breath, but not with your hand). And this is just a partial list.

Compare the complexity and micromanaging of the Pharisees' rules with the original rule in God's Word: "Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is a sabbath to the Lord your God. On it you shall not do any work, neither you, nor your son or daughter, nor your male or female servant, nor your animals, nor any foreigner residing in your towns. For in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but he rested on the seventh day. Therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy" (Exodus 20:8–11). It was simply man made traditions that defined Jesus' healing as "work." So when Jesus healed on the Sabbath, He was challenging the Pharisees' beliefs as being from man and not from God.

**Another reason Jesus healed on the Sabbath was to remind people of why God instituted the Sabbath day of rest.**The Sabbath was meant to [benefit people](#) as much as to glorify God: "The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath" (Mark 2:27). The Sabbath helped people recuperate (mentally and physically) after a week of work and redirect their focus from the daily routine to God. Jesus' healing on the Sabbath was therefore very much compatible with God's purpose for the Sabbath.

**Confronted with Jesus' undeniable power to heal and restore, the religious leaders passed up their chance to reflect on the possibility that they were wrong. Instead, they dug in their heels and doubled down on their untenable position. Their stubbornness is a good reminder for us of our need to examine our beliefs and ensure they are biblical and in line with the Word of God.** [GotQuestions.org](#)

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**Related Resources on the Sabbath:**

- [What day is the Sabbath, Saturday or Sunday? Do Christians have to observe the Sabbath day?](#)

- [How is Jesus our Sabbath Rest?](#)
- [What is the Sabbath day?](#)
- [What does it mean that Jesus is the Lord of the Sabbath?](#)
- [Is Sunday the Christian Sabbath?](#)
- [What does it mean to remember the Sabbath day and keep it holy?](#)
- [What is the Lord's day?](#)
- [Is working on Sunday a sin?](#)
- [Did Constantine change the Sabbath from Saturday to Sunday?](#)
- Baker's Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology - [Sabbath](#)

**John 5:11** But he answered them, "He who made me well was the one who said to me, **Pick up your pallet and walk.**"

BGT John 5:11 ὁ περκθηατοϛ ποι σαϛ με γι κε ν ϛ μοι ε πεν· ρον τ ν κρ βαττ ν σου κα περιπ τει.

KJV John 5:11 He answered them, He that made me whole, the same said unto me, Take up thy bed, and walk.

NET John 5:11 But he answered them, "The man who made me well said to me, 'Pick up your mat and walk.'"

CSB John 5:11 He replied, "The man who made me well told me, 'Pick up your mat and walk.'"

ESV John 5:11 But he answered them, "The man who healed me, that man said to me, 'Take up your bed, and walk.'"

NIV John 5:11 But he replied, "The man who made me well said to me, 'Pick up your mat and walk.'"

NLT John 5:11 But he replied, "The man who healed me told me, 'Pick up your mat and walk.'"

- Jn 9:16 Mk 2:9-11

## THE HEALER GAVE THE COMMAND TO WALK

**But** - Term of contrast. Why the contrast? What had the Jewish leaders just accused him of doing? So in effect the healed man does a quick two step (bad pun since he can now walk) and shifts the blame to the unknown man.

**He answered them, "He who made me well ([hugies](#)) was the one who said to me, 'Pick up ([aorist imperative](#)) your pallet ([krabattos](#)) and walk. ([present imperative](#))'"** - These religious hypocrites could care less that this man had been healed. This should have made them rejoice and give praise to God, but legalists are joyless and their worship is worthless (because it is not in spirit and in truth)! They had what Swindoll calls "the glass-half-empty perspective!"

**Kruse** points out that "Despite the fact that Jesus had performed many miracles in Jerusalem on his previous visit, and many had believed in him, this man knew nothing about him; he did not even know his name." (Borrow [The Gospel according to John : an introduction and commentary](#))

**Spurgeon's Exposition** - And he did answer them, too. It was a crushing answer. That was his warrant. None but God could have made him whole. God can set aside any of his laws if he pleases; at any rate, whatever he commands, must be right.

**Swindoll** - Imagine you had a neighbor who had been paralyzed from the neck down by an accident more than thirty years ago. One Sunday morning, just after six o'clock, the sound of a lawnmower jolts you from a deep, satisfying sleep. Annoyed, you bolt to the front door to see who would be so insensitive as to rattle every window on the block with that infernal noise so early on a day of rest. Upon seeing your formerly paralyzed friend gleefully mowing his lawn in perfect health, what do you think you would say? If you're a normal person, you'd say, "Hank! What happened? How are you not paralyzed?!" But if you're a Pharisee, you'd scream, "Hank! It's Sunday morning! Turn that thing off!" Instead of looking for a wonder-worker to praise, the Pharisees went in search of a troublemaker to censure. (BORROW [Insights on John](#) or see [Insights on John](#) scroll up and down for more text)

**John 5:12** They asked him, "Who is the man who said to you, **Pick up your pallet and walk'?"**

BGT John 5:12 ρ τησαν α τ ν· τ ϛ στιν νθρωπος ε π ν σοι· ρον κα περιπ τει;

KJV John 5:12 Then asked they him, What man is that which said unto thee, Take up thy bed, and walk?

NET John 5:12 They asked him, "Who is the man who said to you, 'Pick up your mat and walk?'"

CSB John 5:12 "Who is this man who told you, 'Pick up your mat and walk?'" they asked.

ESV John 5:12 They asked him, "Who is the man who said to you, 'Take up your bed and walk?'"

NIV John 5:12 So they asked him, "Who is this fellow who told you to pick it up and walk?"

NLT John 5:12 "Who said such a thing as that?" they demanded.

- **Who:** Jdg 6:29 1Sa 14:38 Mt 21:23 Ro 10:2
- [John 5 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## MYSTERY HEALER

**They asked him, "Who is the man who said to you, 'Pick up your pallet ([krabattos](#)) and walk' - They = the [legalistic Jewish authorities](#).** You've got to believe these legalistic leaders had some inkling of the identity of the mystery healer. It is notable that this Sabbath healing story repeats "**Pick up your pallet and walk**" three times! Notice the Jews did not attempt to deny the miracle and accuse the man of "faking" a healing! As with all of Jesus miracles, it was not that they did not believe the miracle, but that they refused to believe in the Miracle Worker!

**THOUGHT** - If you are a skeptic who doubts Jesus ever existed or doubts He was God incarnate, you may be saying if I had seen these miracles, I would have believed. No! It is not likely you would have believed in Jesus. You too may have believed in the miracles like the Jewish leaders did, but not in Jesus for belief in Jesus would require a major "paradigm shift!"

**Robertson** on **who is the man** - Contemptuous expression, "Who is the fellow?" They ask about the command to violate the Sabbath, not about the healing. ([John 5 Commentary](#))

**Vincent** - "See the cunning of malice. They do not say, 'Who is he that healed thee?' but, 'Who bade thee take up thy bed?'" ([John 5 Commentary](#))

**Spurgeon's Exposition** - They asked, "What man" had given this command. Why, if it had been a mere man who had said it, the impotent man could not either have taken up his bed, or have walked!

### Related Resource:

- [What were the miracles of Jesus? What miracles did Jesus perform? | GotQuestions.org](#)

**John 5:13 But the man who was healed did not know who it was, for Jesus had slipped away while there was a crowd in that place.**

BGT John 5:13 ὁ αθε ρο κ δει τ ς στιν, γ ρ ησο ς ξ νευσεν χλου ντος ν τ τ π .

KJV John 5:13 And he that was healed wist not who it was: for Jesus had conveyed himself away, a multitude being in that place.

NET John 5:13 But the man who had been healed did not know who it was, for Jesus had slipped out, since there was a crowd in that place.

CSB John 5:13 But the man who was cured did not know who it was, because Jesus had slipped away into the crowd that was there.

ESV John 5:13 Now the man who had been healed did not know who it was, for Jesus had withdrawn, as there was a crowd in the place.

NIV John 5:13 The man who was healed had no idea who it was, for Jesus had slipped away into the crowd that was there.

NLT John 5:13 The man didn't know, for Jesus had disappeared into the crowd.

- **did not know who it was** Jn 14:9
- **had**: Jn 8:59 Lu 4:30 Lk 24:31
- [John 5 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passages:

John 8:59+ Therefore they picked up stones to throw at Him, but Jesus hid Himself and went out of the temple.

Luke 4:30+ But passing through their midst, He went His way.

### SLIP SLIDING AWAY!

[Slip sliding away](#) means to escape, leave or disappear quietly and in secret.

**But** - Term of contrast. What is being contrasted?

**The man who was healed (iaomai) did not know (eido) who it was** - Recall he called him "Sir" ([kurios](#)) but did not recognize Him as "Lord" (as did folks like the centurion in Lk 7:6+ or Peter in Lk 5:8+). We know that salvation is God's gift to all "those who believe in His Name." It follows that this man could not have believed in His Name because He had no idea who had healed him.

**MacArthur** - His fear of the authorities is in marked contrast to the formerly blind man in John 9, who boldly confronted them (John 9:17, 24-33). As Leon Morris wryly observes, "The man was not the stuff of which heroes are made (BORROW [The Gospel according to John](#) by Leon Morris). ([An Ungrateful Response to Jesus](#))

**For (gar** - Term of explanation). Always pause to ask at least one question - what is the writer explaining? Do this even when it is obvious! I can assure you that in some of Paul's writings it will not be as easy as this one!

**Jesus had slipped away while there was a crowd in that place- Slipped away** is a [hapax legomenon](#) (only NT use - 3x in Lxx - 2Ki 2:24; 2Ki 23:16; Mic. 6:14) verb **ekneuo** (from ek = out + neuo = to move, tend, incline) meaning to turn aside, to slip away, to draw away from so that one gets away unnoticed or disappears. Vincent ([John 5 Commentary](#)) says the verb means literally to turn the head aside, in order to avoid something, hence, generally to retire or withdraw. To shake off, spoken of a horse and meaning to toss the head about. It is difficult to state whether Jesus disappearing was natural (blending in with the crowds) or supernatural. (Cf John 8:59+ Luke 4:30+)

**A T Robertson** on **slipped away** (KJV = had conveyed himself away,) First aorist active indicative of ekneō, old verb to swim out, to slip out, or from **ekneuō**, to turn out, to turn the head to one side (to one side with which compare eneneuon, they nodded, Luke 1:62). Either of these verbs can explain the form here. The aorist tense simply states an antecedent action without being a pastperfect. ([John 5 Commentary](#))

**Augustine** suggests that "it is difficult in a crowd to see Christ, a certain solitude is necessary for our mind."

**Healed** (cured) ([2390](#)) [iaomai](#) means to cure, to heal, to restore. **iaomai** is used literally of deliverance from physical diseases and afflictions and so to make whole, restore to bodily health or heal. To cause someone to achieve health after having been sick. In the passive it means to be healed or cured. Figuratively, iaomai speaks of deliverance from sin and its evil consequences and thus to restore (to spiritual good health), make whole, renew (Mt 13:15). In the passive, iaomai figuratively means to be restored, to recover or to be healed as in 1Pe 2:24. **iaomai** refers primarily to physical healing in the NT (although clearly there is overlap because some of these instances involved demonic oppression - Lk 9:42), and much less commonly to spiritual healing or healing (saving) from "moral illnesses" and the consequences of sin. When used in this sense iaomai has much the same meaning as sozo, to save, make whole, restore to spiritual health. Here are the uses of iaomai used with a spiritual meaning = Mt 13:15, John 12:40, Acts 28:27 - preceding quotes from Isa 6:10, 1Pe 2:24 = quote from Isa 53:5. It is interesting that most of the NT uses in the Gospels refer to physical healing by Jesus (excepting the physical healing that resulted by release from demonic oppression). However in the OT (Lxx) uses iaomai refers primarily to spiritual healing by the Messiah (Isa 53:5, Isa 61:1, et al).

**iaomai - 26v - curing(1), heal(4), healed(16), healing(2), heals(1), perform healing(2).** Matt. 8:8; Matt. 8:13; Matt. 13:15; Matt. 15:28; Mk. 5:29; Lk. 5:17; Lk. 6:18; Lk. 6:19; Lk. 7:7; Lk. 8:47; Lk. 9:2; Lk. 9:11; Lk. 9:42; Lk. 14:4; Lk. 17:15; Lk. 22:51; Jn. 4:47; Jn. 5:13; Jn. 12:40; Acts 9:34; Acts 10:38; Acts 28:8; Acts 28:27; Heb. 12:13; Jas. 5:16; 1 Pet. 2:24

Years are short to the happy and healthy; but thirty-eight years of disease must have dragged a very weary length along the life of the poor impotent man. When Jesus, therefore, healed him by a word, while he lay at the pool of Bethesda, he was delightfully sensible of a change. Even so the sinner who has for weeks and months been paralysed with despair, and has wearily sighed for salvation, is very conscious of the change when the Lord Jesus speaks the word of power, and gives joy and peace in believing. The evil removed is too great to be removed without our discerning it; the life imparted is too remarkable to be possessed and remain inoperative; and the change wrought is too marvellous not to be perceived. Yet the poor man was ignorant of the author of his cure; he knew not the sacredness of his person, the offices which he sustained, or the errand which brought him among men. Much ignorance of Jesus may remain in hearts which yet feel the power of his blood. We must not hastily condemn men for lack of knowledge; but where we can see the faith which saves the soul, we must believe that salvation has been bestowed. The Holy Spirit makes men penitents long before he makes them divines; and he who believes what he knows, shall soon know more clearly what he believes. Ignorance is, however, an evil; for this poor man was much tantalized by the Pharisees, and was quite unable to cope with them. It is good to be able to answer gainsayers; but we cannot do so if we know not the Lord Jesus clearly and with understanding. The cure of his ignorance, however, soon followed the cure of his infirmity, for he was visited by the Lord in the temple; and after that gracious manifestation, he was found testifying that "it was Jesus who had made him whole." Lord, if thou hast saved me, show me thyself, that I may declare thee to the sons of men.

**John 5:14** Afterward Jesus found him in the temple and said to him, **"Behold, you have become well; do not sin anymore, so that nothing worse happens to you."**

BGT John 5:14 μετὰ ταῦτα ἐρσκεῖ αὐτὸν ἰησοῦς ἐν τῷ ἑρκαεπεν αὐτὸν· ὁμοίως γὰρ γονακί, μήκτι μὴ ῥαυε, να μ χερὲν σο τι γνηται.

KJV John 5:14 Afterward Jesus findeth him in the temple, and said unto him, Behold, thou art made whole: sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee.

NET John 5:14 After this Jesus found him at the temple and said to him, "Look, you have become well. Don't sin any more, lest anything worse happen to you."

CSB John 5:14 After this, Jesus found him in the temple complex and said to him, "See, you are well. Do not sin anymore, so that something worse doesn't happen to you."

ESV John 5:14 Afterward Jesus found him in the temple and said to him, "See, you are well! Sin no more, that nothing worse may happen to you."

NIV John 5:14 Later Jesus found him at the temple and said to him, "See, you are well again. Stop sinning or something worse may happen to you."

NLT John 5:14 But afterward Jesus found him in the Temple and told him, "Now you are well; so stop sinning, or something even worse may happen to you."

NRS John 5:14 Later Jesus found him in the temple and said to him, "See, you have been made well! Do not sin any more, so that nothing worse happens to you."

NJB John 5:14 After a while Jesus met him in the Temple and said, 'Now you are well again, do not sin any more, or something worse may happen to you.'

NAB John 5:14 After this Jesus found him in the temple area and said to him, "Look, you are well; do not sin any more, so that nothing worse may happen to you."

YLT John 5:14 After these things, Jesus findeth him in the temple, and said to him, 'Lo, thou hast become whole; sin no more, lest something worse may happen to thee.'

GWN John 5:14 Later, Jesus met the man in the temple courtyard and told him, "You're well now. Stop sinning so that something worse doesn't happen to you."

BBE John 5:14 After a time Jesus came across him in the Temple and said to him, See, you are well and strong; do no more sin for fear a worse thing comes to you.

RSV John 5:14 Afterward, Jesus found him in the temple, and said to him, "See, you are well! Sin no more, that nothing worse befall you."



NKJ John 5:14 Afterward Jesus found him in the temple, and said to him, "See, you have been made well. Sin no more, lest a worse thing come upon you."

ASV John 5:14 Afterward Jesus findeth him in the temple, and said unto him, Behold, thou art made whole: sin no more, lest a worse thing befall thee.

MIT John 5:14 Later on Jesus found him in the temple and said to him, "See, you are healthy now. Do not continue to sin lest something worse happen to you."

DBY John 5:14 After these things Jesus finds him in the temple, and said to him, Behold, thou art become well: sin no more, that something worse do not happen to thee.

NIRV John 5:14 Later Jesus found him at the temple. Jesus said to him, "See, you are well again. Stop sinning, or something worse may happen to you."

RWB John 5:14 Afterward Jesus findeth him in the temple, and said to him, Behold, thou art cured: sin no more, lest a worse thing come to thee.

WEB John 5:14 Afterward Jesus findeth him in the temple, and said to him, Behold, thou art cured: sin no more, lest a worse thing come to thee.

- **in the temple:** Lev 7:12 Ps 9:13 27:6 66:13-15 107:20-22 116:12-19 118:18 Isa 38:20,22
- **sin:** Jn 8:11 Ezr 9:13,14 Ne 9:28 1Pe 4:3
- **So that:** Jn 5:5 Lev 26:23,24,27 2Ch 28:22 Mt 12:45 Rev 2:21-23
- [John 5 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## Related Passages:

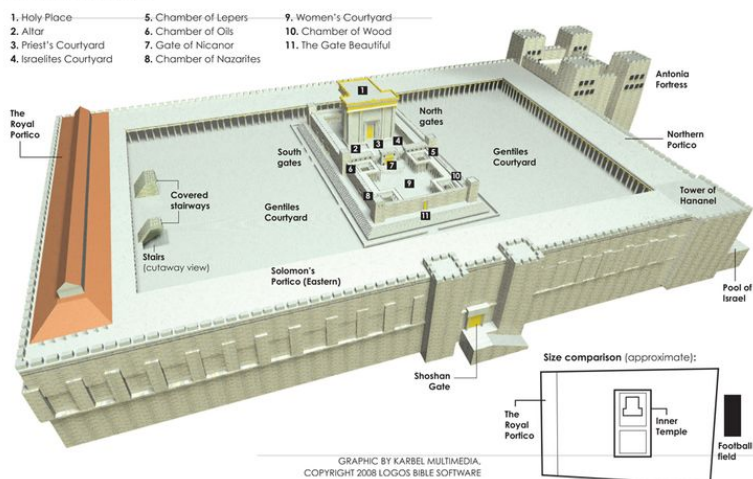
Deuteronomy 28:58-61+ (**ILLNESS AND SIN**) "If you are not careful to observe all the words of this law which are written in this book, to fear this honored and awesome name, the LORD your God, 59 then the LORD will bring extraordinary plagues on you and your descendants, even severe and lasting plagues, and miserable and chronic sicknesses. 60 "He will bring back on you all the diseases of Egypt of which you were afraid, and they will cling to you. 61 "Also every sickness and every plague which, not written in the book of this law, the LORD will bring on you until you are destroyed.

Leviticus 26:14-16+ (**ILLNESS AND SIN**) 'But if you do not obey Me and do not carry out all these commandments, 15 if, instead, you reject My statutes, and if your soul abhors My ordinances so as not to carry out all My commandments, and so break My covenant, 16 I, in turn, will do this to you: I will appoint over you a sudden terror, consumption and fever that will waste away the eyes and cause the soul to pine away; also, you will sow your seed uselessly, for your enemies will eat it up.

John 9:1-3+ As He passed by, He saw a man blind from birth. 2 And His disciples asked Him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he would be born blind?" 3 Jesus answered, "It was neither that this man sinned, nor his parents; but it was so that the works of God might be displayed in him. (NOT ALL SICKNESS IS SIN RELATED!)

## Herod's Temple

King Herod the Great began renovations on the Second Temple approximately 20-19 BC. The entire temple wasn't completed until approximately 62-64 AD, only to be destroyed by the Romans in 70 AD.



## HEALED PARALYTIC IN TEMPLE

**Afterward Jesus found** ([heurisko](#)) **him in the temple** ([hieros](#)) - As shown above the Temple complex was large, so exactly where Jesus found the man is not stated. **Found** ([heurisko](#)) means to find after searching. Undoubtedly there were many Jews in this area, but Jesus has no difficulty in finding the healed man! Was this man giving glory to God for his healing? Possibly, but the text is not clear. We know from some other related events that witnesses of the healing in Mk 2:12+ and Lk 5:25-26+ "went home glorifying God." Some feel that because the healed man came to the Temple, this was evidence that he had been saved, but I think that is a stretch because the truth is that most of the Jews who went to the Temple were not saved.

In Mt 9:1-7 Jesus told the paralytic "Take courage, son, your sins are forgiven." And then to show that He had the authority to forgive sins (i.e., He was God!), he told the paralyzed man to "Get up, pick up your bed and go home," which is exactly what the man did.

**And said to him, "Behold** ([idou](#)) **you have become well** ([hugies](#)) - **Behold** is important attention getter for Jesus is seeking to get the healed man's full attention to explain to him that there is something far more important than the man's physical healing (see below)!

**Do not sin** ([hamartano](#)) **anymore** - "No longer go on sinning." **Do not sin** is a command in the [present imperative with a negative](#) (see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)) Stop sinning (like you are doing) or do not begin to sin. Now clearly Jesus is not calling for perfection (or we'd all be "dead in the water!") but is speaking of direction. And the only way any fallen man or woman can walk in the "direction" of holiness and sinning less, is by walking in the supernatural power of the Holy Spirit. But as discussed below there is no definitive, conclusive evidence that this man was born again (although some commentators think he was born again) as there is with the blind man given sight in John 9.

**Grant Osborne** favors this man's illness is sin related pointing out that "Carson (1991:245-246) discusses attempts to avoid saying the man's illness was not the result of sin: (1) "Stop sinning" only implies that the man was not chosen due to his moral perfection; nothing more is meant; (2) elsewhere illness and death occur for the glory of God, not due to sin (Jn 9:3; 11:4); (3) as in Luke 13:1-5 (the murder of Galileans and those on whom the tower of Siloam fell), terrible events are not always due to personal sin. But such is not the case here: (1) Much suffering in Scripture is due to specific sins (Acts 5:1-11; 1 Cor 11:30); (2) here "**something even worse**" is tied together with "stop sinning," **implying** that the earlier illness was the result of sin; (3) Luke 13:1-5 does not address the suffering individual and so is irrelevant for this issue; (4) according to Scripture, the Fall has produced all suffering, and so it makes sense that some suffering will be specifically linked to sin; (5) in this context it is possible, indeed likely, that Jesus chose this invalid because his illness was tied to a specific sin. (See [The Gospel of John](#)) (bolding added)

**John MacArthur** agrees with Osborne regarding the relationship between the man's paralysis and sin writing "The most natural understanding of the Lord's warning, then, is that the man's illness was the result of specific personal **sin** on his part. If the man persisted in unrepentant sin, Jesus warned, he would suffer a fate infinitely **worse** than thirty-eight years of a debilitating disease—namely, eternal punishment in hell." ([An Ungrateful Response to Jesus](#))

**Warren Wiersbe** also agrees that "The Lord's words (John 5:14) suggest that the man's physical plight had been the result of sin; but **Jesus did not say that the man's sins had been forgiven as He did in dealing with the sick man lowered through the roof** (see Mark 2:1-12+). **It is possible to experience an exciting miracle and still not be saved and go to heaven!** (ED: COMPARE THE WORDS OF THOSE WHO ACTUALLY PERFORM MIRACLES AND THUS THINK THEY ARE SAVED IN Mt 7:22-23+! EXPERIENCING OR EVEN DOING MIRACLES DOES NOT SAVE A PERSON!) ([Bible Exposition Commentary](#))

*The impotent man met the Omnipotent Man.*

**J Vernon McGee** disagrees with **Wiersbe** (I agree with Wiersbe, et al below and disagree with McGee on his interpretation) writing first that this man's "condition was the result of his own sin." Then **McGee** added "What actually happened was simply this: **the Lord healed him physically at the pool of Bethesda, but He healed his soul there in the temple.** Sin had caused the man's trouble. First he got a well body, and then he got a well soul. He came to know Jesus, you see. Then he was able to tell who He was. This impotent man was waiting and waiting, looking at the pool, and one day Jesus, the Lamb of God, came by and saw him. Then the man saw Jesus. The impotent man met the Omnipotent Man. The thing that is amazing to me is that there were multitudes left in those porches and they were not healed. Today there are multitudes who are not saved. Isn't Jesus willing to save them? Yes, but they haven't looked at Jesus (ED: Cp Isaiah 45:22). They're just waiting, friend, waiting for something to happen. ([John 5 Commentary](#) or BORROW [Gospel of John Volume 1](#)) (Bolding added)

**Charles Swindoll** agrees with **Wiersbe** writing "Some have taken Jesus' warning to mean that sin had caused the man's illness, but Jesus later denied a moral cause-effect relationship between sin and physical disabilities (John 9:3+) (ED: BUT SEE A T

ROBERTSON'S NOTE BELOW). A simpler explanation is that Jesus knew the man's heart. **Having delivered the man from his physical affliction, Jesus sought to save the man from eternal spiritual suffering.** The "worse" Jesus had in mind was hell. Jewish theology of the day correctly taught that sin deserves punishment; however, the rabbis incorrectly attributed physical illness to God's wrath. The true and ultimate punishment for sin is eternal torment after death. (BORROW [Insights on John](#) or see [Insights on John](#) scroll up and down for more text) (Bolding added)

**Osborne** does not think this man was saved - It is common in healing miracles for physical transformation to lead to spiritual transformation. In many miracle stories, the verb [sozo](#) has this double meaning, indicating both to "heal" and "save" (cf. Mk 5:34; Mk 6:56; Mk 10:52; and parallels). Jesus challenged the man to get right with God lest he face divine judgment for sin, which is far worse than simple illness. This was more than a moral challenge. Jesus offered the man life from above (Jn 3:3, 5; so Whitacre). **He had shown a glimmer of faith when he responded to Jesus' command by getting up and carrying his mat. Now he had to make the second step and turn from sin to God. He had to choose between life and judgment.** There was no middle ground. This is the key message of the book—light or darkness, life or judgment. We must all make the same choice as this man, and that choice will determine whether we receive eternal life or face eternal death. Sadly, this man made the wrong choice. Rather than respond to Jesus, he "went and told the Jewish leaders that it was Jesus who had healed him." He betrayed Jesus to his enemies. This does not mean the man was another Judas; he acted in ignorance—but ignorance in this book is tantamount to rejection (cf. Jn 1:10). Metzner (1999:179-180, 190-191) shows that this man, who never came to faith, represents Jewish unbelief. Unlike the man born blind (Jn 9:17, 25, 30-33, 36-38), he showed no movement from spiritual dullness to belief. He failed to respond to Jesus' offer and so provided the worst example yet of those encountered by Jesus. This was no studied rejection. **He simply remained in ignorance and thus in unbelief** (see Moloney, Keener, Köstenberger). (See [The Gospel of John](#)) - bolding added)

**Rodney Whitacre** agrees with Osborne writing - Asking this man to sin no more seems like an impossible request, an intolerable burden, but it is actually part of the good news. In the first place it implies that he has been forgiven (cf. Jn 8:11; Mt 9:1-8 par. Mk 2:1-12 par. Lk 5:17-26). Here we see the Lamb of God at work, taking away the sins of the world, forgiving even those who will go on to betray him. But furthermore there is a theme in John and 1 John that Christians have been freed from the power of sin. Jesus is challenging this man to a new life, the life from above (Jn 3:3, 5). The barest glimmer of faith on this man's part brought Jesus' healing to his life, and now he is to move far beyond his weakness, both physically and spiritually. As George MacDonald has put it, God is easy to please but hard to satisfy. **Failing to turn to this new life will result in something worse happening—something worse than being an invalid for thirty-eight years! Jesus is offering the man life and threatening him with judgment. These are two sides of a single coin, and together they are the hallmark of all of Jesus' ministry, as will be stated shortly in his keynote address** (John 5:24-29). The light of God's love brings division (John 3:16-21); one is heading toward either life or death. This image of Jesus threatening a man with hell is not very popular in some circles, but it is a fundamental element in the portrait of all four Gospels. No one in Scripture talks about hell more than Jesus. And he never talks about it, as George MacDonald does (WOE!), as a purifying fire that will burn you until you are good. God's love is indeed a purifying fire, and that very fire is a part of the good news. If we love God we will want him to purge all sin from us, and the good news is that he is willing and able to do so. The Great Physician will not allow any of the disease to remain within us (**ED: THAT'S CALLED GLORIFICATION!**). Thanks be to God! Jesus, however, never speaks of hell in these terms; it is always spoken of as something to avoid at all cost (for example, Mt 5:29-30; Mt 18:8-9; Mk 9:43-48). **John portrays this man, therefore, in a very negative light. He is a sinner, unlike the blind man in chapter John 9, and he betrays the one who healed him.** He knows that these leaders were upset with Jesus (John 5:10). So when he informs the opponents he is prefiguring informers later (John 11:46) as well as Judas' betrayal at a later feast in Jerusalem (John 18:2-3). This man's betrayal of Jesus is in marked contrast to the blind man's devotion (chap. John 9), for the blind man confesses Jesus by standing up to the very opponents this man sides with against Jesus. The man's ingratitude is apparent. ([The Opening Revelation of the Glory Reaches a Climax 5:1-15](#))

**Gotquestions.org** - The postscript to the story reveals that the man who was *physically* healed still needed *spiritual* healing. "Later Jesus found him at the temple and said to him, 'See, you are well again. Stop sinning or something worse may happen to you'" (John 5:14). Jesus' words are a rebuke of an unnamed sin—the man was living contrary to God's will somehow—and a warning of "something worse." What could be worse than thirty-eight years of paralysis? How about an eternity in hell (see Mark 9:47+)?

**Blum on do not sin...nothing worse** - Jesus' warning (Stop sinning or something worse may happen to you) does not mean that his paralysis was caused by any specific sin (cf. Jn 9:3), though all disease and death come ultimately from sin. The warning was that his tragic life of 38 years as an invalid was no comparison to the doom of hell. Jesus is interested not merely in healing a person's body. Far more important is the healing of his soul from sin.

**Bruce Barton** - In this case, Jesus sought out the healed man to warn him that though he was healed physically, his thirty-eight years as an invalid would be nothing compared to something *worse*—that is, eternity in hell. The man needed to stop sinning and come to salvation in Christ. He had been lame, but now he could walk. This was a great miracle. But he needed an even greater

miracle—to have his sins forgiven. The man was delighted to be physically healed, but he had to turn from his sins and seek God's forgiveness to be spiritually healed. (BORROW [John - Life Application Commentary](#))

**Merrill C Tenney** - There is no indication that this encounter strengthened the man's faith and attachment to Jesus; in fact, the contrary could easily be inferred. But he did confess Jesus as his healer. (ED: BUT DOES NOT OBVIOUSLY CONFESS HIM AS LORD - see Ro 10:9-10+) (See [The Expositor's Bible Commentary](#) scroll up and down for more pages)

**So that** (term of purpose or result) **nothing worse happens to you** - What does Jesus imply by "nothing worse?" What had been his state? Paralyzed for 38 years (Jn 5:5). As a number of writers suggest, this statement implies that his condition was in some way related to sin (see [Osborne above](#)). Something **worse** might happen to him! What could be worse? Imprisoned in hell for eternity would be far worse!

**D A Carson** on something worse - The something worse must be final judgment (cf. Jn 5:29).

Greek expert **A T Robertson** notes that "Present active imperative with *mēketi* (a negative) ([present imperative with a negative](#)), conveys a clear implication that the man's disease was due to personal sin as is so often the case (ED: cf David's state when he kept quiet for over 9 months about his sin with Bathsheba and murder of Uriah - Ps 32:2-4+, Ps 38:1-8+). Jesus used the same words to the woman taken in adultery in the spurious passage (ED: NOT IN MOST MANUSCRIPTS) (John 8:11). He had suffered for 38 years. **All sickness is not due to personal sin** (John 9:3+), but much is and nature is a hard paymaster (cf 1Co 11:30+ where a "number sleep!"). Jesus is here living up to his name (Matthew 1:21 "He will save His people from their sins.").....**Worse** than the illness of 38 years, bad as that is. He will now be sinning against knowledge. ([John 5 Commentary](#))

**John MacArthur** - The most natural understanding of the Lord's warning, then, is that the man's illness was the result of specific personal sin on his part. If the man persisted in unrepentant sin, Jesus warned, he would suffer a fate infinitely worse than thirty-eight years of a debilitating disease—namely, eternal punishment in hell. The man's response suggests that he failed to heed Jesus' warning, since he promptly went away, and told the Jews that it was Jesus who had made him well. It is astonishing that he would accept this healing after nearly four decades of terrible distress and then walk away from Jesus and show his loyalty to the Jews who hated Him. This has to be one of the great acts of ingratitude and obstinate unbelief in Scripture. He did not intend to praise or worship Jesus for healing him. ([An Ungrateful Response to Jesus](#))

**Rod Mattoon** - This man was ignorant of the man who helped him and changed his life. There was no indication he was saved, just healed. He reminds us of the ignorance that exists today in people. **Christ has done everything for our salvation, but many are ignorant and blind to the truth.....**"Go and sin no more." Sin does affect one's health. It is possible that this was the case here. We don't know for sure (cf 1Co 11:29-30, Jas 5:15, Gal 6:7-8). (Mattoon's Treasures – Treasures from John, Volume 1)

**George Macdonald** - I believe that no man is ever condemned for any sin except one—that he will not leave his sins and come out of them, and be the child of Him who is his Father.

[Spurgeon's Exposition](#) - Probably, this man's illness had been caused by sin. Christ bids him henceforth keep clear of sin, lest a worse calamity should come upon him.

The [NET Note](#) does not agree with **Robertson** writing "Since this is a prohibition with a present imperative, the translation **'stop sinning'** is sometimes suggested. This is not likely, however, since the present tense is normally used in prohibitions involving a general condition (as here) while the aorist tense is normally used in specific instances. Only when used opposite the normal usage (the present tense in a specific instance, for example) would the meaning "stop doing what you are doing" be appropriate."

I cannot pray, except I sin;  
I cannot preach, but I sin;  
I cannot administer, nor receive the holy sacrament, but I sin.  
My very repentance needs to be repented of;  
And the tears I shed need washing in the blood of Christ.  
-- William Beveridge

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**Found** (2147) [heurisko](#) means to find after searching and so to discover (Mt 7:7), to find accidentally or without seeking (Mt 12:44), to experience for oneself and to obtain or procure (He 9:12).

**Temple** (2413) [hieros](#) is the Greek word [hieros](#) and adjective which in the neuter singular is [hieron](#) (as found in Friberg's definition below) to which **A H Strong** assigned a different number [2411](#). **Hieros** is defined by **Louw-Nida** as "pertaining to being appropriate for the expression of worship and reverence." In 1 Cor 9:13 **hieros** refers to the activities in the Temple involving the performance of various rituals. In 2 Ti 3:15 **hieros** refers to the "sacred writings" (the Holy Scriptures which in context would be the OT Scriptures as that was all that was available to the Jews). **Friberg** on **hieros** (*hieros, a, on*) - (1) with a basic meaning what belongs to divinity,



sacred, holy (2Ti 3.15), opposite [bebelos](#) (profane); (2) [substantially](#); (a) **to hieron** = as a sacred enclosed area under the protection of a god temple (Acts 19.27); (b) predominately of the Temple of God at Jerusalem, including the whole sacred area with its buildings, courts, walls, and gates ( Mt 21.12); (c) ta hiera = as everything that belongs to the Temple and its service the holy or sacred things (1 Cor 9.13)

**Behold** ([2400](#)) [idou](#) is the second person singular aorist middle imperative of eidon which means to see, perceive, look at. In the NT **idou** is used as a demonstrative particle that draws attention to what follows. **idou** in the [middle voice](#) means "you yourself look, see, perceive!" The [aorist imperative](#) is a command emphasizing "Do it now! Don't delay!" In 2Cor 5:17 Paul uses **idou**, to get his reader's attention as he introduces the truth that the one who in now **in Christ** is a qualitatively new person. **Spurgeon** reminds us that "**Behold** is a word of wonder; it is intended to excite admiration. Wherever you see it hung out in Scripture, it is like an ancient sign-board, signifying that there are rich wares within, or like the hands which solid readers have observed in the margin of the older Puritanic books, drawing attention to something particularly worthy of observation." I would add, **behold** is like a divine highlighter, a divine underlining of an especially striking or important text. It says in effect "Listen up, all ye who would be wise in the ways of Jehovah!"

**Well** (sound, healed, good health, restored) ([5199](#)) [hugies](#) which is the root of [hugiaino](#); English = **hygiene, hygienic**) literally refers to being physically (and mentally) well or sound (emphasizes the absence of disease, weakness, or malfunction), healthy (implies full strength and vigor as well as freedom from signs of disease). **Hugies** describes that which balanced and ordered throughout. **Hugies** was used figuratively to describe speech which was uncorrupted, correct, accurate, balanced and ordered throughout, in addition to speech which is useful and beneficial. Health implies a proper balance of the whole.

**Hugies - 12x - good health(1), healed(1), normal(1), restored(1), sound(1), well(7).** Matt. 12:13; Matt. 15:31; Mk. 5:34; Jn. 5:4; Jn. 5:6; Jn. 5:9; Jn. 5:11; Jn. 5:14; Jn. 5:15; Jn. 7:23; Acts 4:10; Tit. 2:8

**Sin** (verb) ([264](#)) [hamartano](#) literally means to miss the mark (and so not share in the prize). **Hamartano** means to act contrary to the will and law of God. To commit a wrong. To be in error. **Hamartano** emphasizes loss which always results from missing God's mark or target, His **good and acceptable and perfect will** (Ro 12:2) Like **hamartía, (hamartánō)** is regularly used in ancient times of an archer missing the target (Homer, Aesch., etc). Every decision (action) done apart from faith ([pistis](#)) is sin (Ro 14:23+; cf. Heb 11:6+). **Hamartánō** ("choosing sin") asserts the agenda of self, by (for) self, over God's loving plan Believers experience loss every time they sin (cf. Heb 10:26), as it diminishes their unique glorification awarded by Christ at His return.

**Hamartano - 37v - commit sin(1), committed...offense(1), committing(1), sin(11), sinned(17), sinning(4), sins(8).** Matt. 18:15; Matt. 18:21; Matt. 27:4; Lk. 15:18; Lk. 15:21; Lk. 17:3; Lk. 17:4; Jn. 5:14; Jn. 8:11; Jn. 9:2; Jn. 9:3; Acts 25:8; Rom. 2:12; Rom. 3:23; Rom. 5:12; Rom. 5:14; Rom. 5:16; Rom. 6:15; 1 Co. 6:18; 1 Co. 7:28; 1 Co. 7:36; 1 Co. 8:12; 1 Co. 15:34; Eph. 4:26; 1 Tim. 5:20; Tit. 3:11; Heb. 3:17; Heb. 10:26; 1 Pet. 2:20; 2 Pet. 2:4; 1 Jn. 1:10; 1 Jn. 2:1; 1 Jn. 3:6; 1 Jn. 3:8; 1 Jn. 3:9; 1 Jn. 5:16; 1 Jn. 5:18

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## Don't Waste It

See, you have been made well. Sin no more, lest a worse thing come upon you. — John 5:14

Today's Scripture: John 5:1-15

The prince of a small, oil-rich Asian nation was indicted for allegedly squandering \$16 billion of his country's wealth. Over a 10-year period, the prince is believed to have lost huge sums through poor judgment and bad investments. His nation's High Court said that he spent \$2.7 billion just on aircraft, yachts, cars, and jewelry.

While shaking my head in disbelief, I had to ask myself if I too am guilty of recklessly wasting riches—the riches of God's grace. If I have received His mercy and forgiveness yet continue to yield to sin, I am squandering His grace.

After Jesus healed a man who had been an invalid for 38 years, the Lord said to him, "See, you have been made well. Sin no more, lest a worse thing come upon you" (John 5:14). It seems that Jesus was warning him not to waste God's healing touch on his life. Paul too pleaded with the Christians in Corinth "not to receive the grace of God in vain" (2 Corinthians 6:1). Indeed, God's grace should result in changed lives (Titus 2:11-12).

As God freely forgives us, His grace opens the door for us to change. How tragic it would be to fritter away a spiritual fortune instead of allowing "the riches of His grace" to transform our lives! (Ephesians 1:7). By: David C. McCasland ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Almighty God, Your grace impart,  
Fix deep conviction on each heart;

Nor let us waste on trifling things  
The life that Your salvation brings.  
—Anon.

To avoid disgrace, grow in grace.

**John 5:15 The man went away, and told the Jews that it was Jesus who had made him well.**

BGT John 5:15 π λθεν νθρωπος κα ν γγειλεν το ς ουδα ο ι ς τι η ς ο ς σ τ ι ν ποι σα ς α τ ν γ ι .

KJV John 5:15 The man departed, and told the Jews that it was Jesus, which had made him whole.

NET John 5:15 The man went away and informed the Jewish leaders that Jesus was the one who had made him well.

CSB John 5:15 The man went and reported to the Jews that it was Jesus who had made him well.

ESV John 5:15 The man went away and told the Jews that it was Jesus who had healed him.

NIV John 5:15 The man went away and told the Jews that it was Jesus who had made him well.

NLT John 5:15 Then the man went and told the Jewish leaders that it was Jesus who had healed him.

NRS John 5:15 The man went away and told the Jews that it was Jesus who had made him well.

- **and told:** Jn 4:29 9:11,12 Mk 1:45
- **who:** Jn 5:12 Jn 9:15,25,30,34
- [John 5 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

### HEALED MAN TELLS ALL TO JEWISH LEADERS

**The man went away** - This is a sad description - Note first he fails to ask Jesus what He meant by **do not sin**. Secondly, he failed to query Him about the something **worse** he might experience! It is tragic that he leaves the Light of the world to go to the darkness of the Jewish leaders. We cannot discern with certainty his eternal fate, but this decision to walk away from Jesus and seemingly to "turn Jesus in" to the authorities suggests that spiritual healing did not accompany his physical healing (see discussion of previous passage).

**MacArthur** writes "It is astonishing that he would accept this healing after nearly four decades of terrible distress and then walk away from Jesus and show his loyalty to the Jews who hated Him. This has to be one of the great acts of ingratitude and obstinate unbelief in Scripture. He did not intend to praise or worship Jesus for healing him."

**And told the Jews ([Ioudaios](#)) that it was Jesus ([Iesous](#)) Who had made him well ([hugies](#))** - The **Jews** is not the Jews in general but in context refers to the Jewish authorities and/or religious leaders (cf Jn 5:10, 16, 18).

**A T Robertson** - Instead of giving heed to the warning of Jesus about his own sins he went off and told the Jews that now he knew who the man was who had commanded him to take up his bed on the Sabbath Day, to clear himself with the ecclesiastics and escape a possible stoning.....The man was either ungrateful and wilfully betrayed Jesus or he was incompetent and did not know that he was bringing trouble on his benefactor. In either case one has small respect for him. ([John 5 Commentary](#))

**Wiersbe** - Did the man "inform" on Jesus because of fear? We do not know. The Jewish leaders at least turned from him and aimed their accusations at Jesus Christ; and, unlike the healed blind man in John 9, this man was not excommunicated. ([Bible Exposition Commentary](#))

**John 5:16 For this reason the Jews were persecuting Jesus, because He was doing these things on the Sabbath.**

BGT John 5:16 κα δι το το δ ωκον ο ουδα ο ι τ ν η ς ο ν , τι τα τα πο ει ν σαββ τ .

KJV John 5:16 And therefore did the Jews persecute Jesus, and sought to slay him, because he had done these things on the sabbath day.



NET John 5:16 Now because Jesus was doing these things on the Sabbath, the Jewish leaders began persecuting him.

CSB John 5:16 Therefore, the Jews began persecuting Jesus because He was doing these things on the Sabbath.

ESV John 5:16 And this was why the Jews were persecuting Jesus, because he was doing these things on the Sabbath.

NIV John 5:16 So, because Jesus was doing these things on the Sabbath, the Jews persecuted him.

NLT John 5:16 So the Jewish leaders began harassing Jesus for breaking the Sabbath rules.

NRS John 5:16 Therefore the Jews started persecuting Jesus, because he was doing such things on the sabbath.

- **persecuting:** Jn 15:20 Ac 9:4,5
- **because He was doing these things on the Sabbath:** Jn 5:13 7:19,20,25 10:39 Mt 12:13 Mk 3:6 Lu 6:11
- [John 5 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## PERSECUTING THE "SABBATH BREAKER"

**For this reason** - A clear term of conclusion. What is the conclusion?

**The Jews** ([loudaios](#) - [see note](#)) **were persecuting** ([dioko](#)) **Jesus** ([loudaios](#)) - **NLT** = "Harassing." This is John's first mention of persecution of Jesus (John 7:1, 19-20, 25-26, 30, 32, 44, 45; Jn 8:37, 40, 59; Jn 11:8, 53, 57). **Were persecuting** is a good translation for the verb [dioko](#) is in the vivid imperfect tense picturing this action over and over, again and again they continued to persecute Him. They are after the blood of Jesus like the bloodhounds chasing after the foxes! As you can [see on the chart above](#), this event marks the beginning of ever increasing persecution and hatred of Jesus by the Jewish leadership which culminates in the Cross.

**A T Robertson** on **persecuting** - "Inchoative imperfect, "began to persecute" and kept it up." They took this occasion as one excuse (dia touto, because of this). (**ED:** NOTE THE PROGRESSION IN JEWISH HOSTILITY) They disliked Jesus when here first (John 2:18) and were suspicious of his popularity (John 4:1). Now they have cause for an open breach." ([John 5 Commentary](#))

*Religion is the greatest persecuting force in the world.*

I like the way **W E Vine** says it - "They were "up in arms to defend their favorite piece of legalism....Their religious zeal utterly outweighed any consideration of the marvelous deliverance granted to the cripple and his joy and comfort in his healing. Religion is the greatest persecuting force in the world. **From the days of Cain onward it is in religion that the innate enmity of the natural mind toward God is particularly manifested**, and as each sign disclosed something of what God is in the person of His Son there was a rising tide of opposition to the One thus revealed and the great incomprehensible depths of mercy and grace of God. ([Collected Writings of W.E. Vine](#)) (Bolding added)

[Spurgeon's Exposition](#) - This was a mere pretense, an idle excuse for their enmity. They not only hated Christ; but they must besmear him with their calumnies, and make him out to be an evil-doer although he was goodness itself.

**Because** (term of explanation) **He was doing these things on the Sabbath** ([sabbaton](#)) - Doing what **things**? Healing on the Sabbath broke their legalistic man-made rules. Tradition can sometimes be good, but when it counters God's word, the results are never good!

**A T Robertson** on **because He was doing** - Imperfect active, not just this one act, but He was becoming a regular Sabbath-breaker! The Pharisees will watch His conduct on the Sabbath henceforth (Mark 2:23; Mark 3:2). ([John 5 Commentary](#))

[NET Note](#) on **these things** - Note the plural phrase **these things** which seems to indicate that Jesus healed on the Sabbath more than once (cf. John 20:30). The synoptic gospels show this to be true; the incident in John 5:1-15 has thus been chosen by the author as representative.

**Blum** - In addition to the case of the invalid's healing (Jn 5:1-15), John later recorded the cure of a blind man on the Sabbath (Jn 9:1-41). The grain-picking (Mark 2:23-28), the healing of a shriveled hand (Mark 3:1-5), curing a woman who had been crippled for 18 years (Luke 13:10-17), and healing a man with dropsy (Luke 14:1-6)—all these took place on the Sabbath. (See [handout on sermon](#))

**J Vernon McGee** notes that "This is the incident that put those bloodhounds of hate on the trail of Jesus. (When John says the "Jews," he is actually referring to the religious rulers of the Jews.) This is the point at which they began to persecute Jesus and sought to slay Him." ([John 5 Commentary](#) or BORROW [Gospel of John Volume 1](#))

**Persecuting** (1377) [dioko](#) rom **dío** = pursue, prosecute, persecute) means to follow or press hard after, literally to pursue as one does a fleeing enemy. It means to chase, harass, vex and pressure and was used for **chasing down criminals**. **Dioko** speaks of an intensity of effort leading to a pursue with earnestness and diligence in order to obtain. To go after with the desire of obtaining or in some contexts the desire to harm. It gives us the picture of going on the track of something like the hounds on the hunt and pursuing after the fox and implying a continuing effort to overtake, reach, or attain the goal.

To persecute - 30/45 NT uses convey the sense of the intention of doing harm. To hunt down like an animal. To run swiftly after something. To in any way whatever, to harass, trouble, molest. To carry out physical persecution, to harass, to abuse, to treat unjustly. (Mt 5:10, 11, 12, Mt 5:44, Mt 10:23, Lk 21:12, Jn 5:16; 15:20; Acts 7:52; 9:4, 5; 22:4,7, 8; 26:14, 15; Ro 12:14; 1Co 4:12; 15:9; 2Co 4:9; Gal 1:13,23; Gal 4:29; Gal 5:11; Php 3:6; 2Ti 3:12; Passive sense - to be maltreated, suffer persecution on account of something -Gal 6:12. Dioko conveys a sense of urgency and a sense of intensity of purpose.

### John 5:17 But He answered them, "My Father is working until now, and I Myself am working."

BGT John 5:17 ὁ [ἡσο ς] πεκρ νατο α το ς· πατ ρ μου ως ρτι ργ ζεται κ γ ργ ζομαι·

KJV John 5:17 But Jesus answered them, My Father worketh hitherto, and I work.

NET John 5:17 So he told them, "My Father is working until now, and I too am working."

CSB John 5:17 But Jesus responded to them, "My Father is still working, and I am working also."

ESV John 5:17 But Jesus answered them, "My Father is working until now, and I am working."

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

NLT John 5:17 But Jesus replied, "My Father is always working, and so am I."

NRS John 5:17 But Jesus answered them, "My Father is still working, and I also am working."

NJB John 5:17 His answer to them was, 'My Father still goes on working, and I am at work, too.'

NAB John 5:17 But Jesus answered them, "My Father is at work until now, so I am at work."

YLT John 5:17 And Jesus answered them, 'My Father till now doth work, and I work;'

GWN John 5:17 Jesus replied to them, "My Father is working right now, and so am I."

BBE John 5:17 But his answer was: My Father is still working even now, and so I am working.

RSV John 5:17 But Jesus answered them, "My Father is working still, and I am working."

- **My Father:** Jn 9:4 Jn 14:10 Ge 2:1,2 Ps 65:6 Isa 40:26 Mt 10:29 Ac 14:17 17:28 1Co 12:6 Col 1:16 Heb 1:3
- [John 5 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

### Related Passages:

John 9:4+ "We must work the works of Him who sent Me (**THE FATHER**) as long as it is day; night is coming when no one can work.

John 14:10+ "Do you not believe that I am in the **Father**, and the **Father** is in Me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on My own initiative, but the **Father** abiding in Me does His works.

John 20:17+ Jesus \*said to her, "Stop clinging to Me, for I have not yet ascended to the**Father**; but go to My brethren and say to them, 'I ascend to **My Father** and **your Father**, and My God and your God.'"

**JESUS REFUTES THE  
ACCUSATION OF BREAKING SABBATH**

**But** - Term of contrast. Why now? What is the contrast? He is presenting the argument against their accusations declaring that God the Father does not suspend His work on the Sabbath and neither does the Son. God still causes the sun to shine and rain to fall on the Sabbath. Similarly the Son's beneficent work is performed independent of what day of the week it is.

**John MacArthur** calls this "The Most Startling Claim Ever Made."

**R C H Lenski** writes that "The brief reply in Jn 5:17 reads like a thesis, of which Jn 5:19–47 are the elaboration." (Borrow [The interpretation of St. John's gospel](#))

**W E Vine** adds "Christ's Reply to His Persecutors With sublime dignity and calm the Lord, in response to their antagonism, begins to disclose His great prerogatives as the Son of God, **His perfect oneness with the Father, the love of the Father for Him, the uninterrupted communion existing between them, and His entire and delighted submission to the Father's will.** He here makes no comment on the sabbath law, as on other occasions. He had something more important to deal with, and His testimony constitutes an essential feature of the fabric of this Gospel." (Bolding added)

**He answered them** - **Them** refers to the Jewish leaders who have obviously caught up with Him in this passage (they were **persecuting** Him in the previous passage). **Answered them** implies they had said something to Him about His breaking their Sabbath laws by working, but their accusations and diatribe are not recorded. Their words are not important for the explanation Jesus now presents. Notice that Jesus makes no comment on the sabbath law (something He did do on other occasions). He sought to focus on "His great prerogatives as the Son of God, His perfect oneness with the Father, the love of the Father for Him, the uninterrupted communion existing between them, and His entire and delighted submission to the Father's will." (Vine)

**Osborne** has an interesting note on **answered** ("replied" in NLT) writing "This is the only place in John (with Jn 5:19) where "replied" (or "explained") is in the middle voice, suggesting a legal setting in which one is giving a defense against charges (so Brown, Morris, Michaels, Whitacre). (See [The Gospel of John](#) scroll up and down for more text).

**Lenski** has an interesting insight - The thesis of Jn 5:17 contains two points, and the discourse elaborates these: (1) regarding the person and the work of Jesus -- Jn 5:19–29 ("My Father is working until now"); (2) regarding the testimony He bore concerning Himself -- Jn 5:30–47 ("I Myself am working"). The double seal of verity, "Amen, amen," is combined with the voice of authority, "I say to you." (Borrow [The Interpretation of St. John's Gospel](#))

**ESV Study Bible (borrow)** - Jesus does not defend himself by getting into a rabbinic discussion on the nature of work. Rather, he claims He is working, just like God (John 5:17), and hence is, as the Synoptics teach, the Lord of the Sabbath (cf. Mt. 12:8+; Mk 2:28+; Lk 6:5+).

*The Father works on the Sabbath!*

**My Father (pater) is (continually) working (ergazomai in present tense) until now, and I Myself am (continually) working (ergazomai)** - NLT = "My Father is always working, and so am I." The first words in Greek ("πατερ μου" = "the Father My") in Jesus' answer to the Jews would have been like a bomb going off in their mind (Note this is the first of 14 uses of "**Father**" which would leave no doubt about what He was trying to get across to these blind religionists!). First He breaks the Sabbath but now even worse (to them) He calls God His very own **Father (pater)**.

**Working (ergazomai)** is the "key word" in this passage and both uses are in the present tense, so that Jesus is saying that He and His Father are both continually **working**. In other words, the Father and the Son did not take a pause or call a "time out" on the Sabbath, a day on which His Father was working! Yes when God created the world He "rested" but this was specifically from His work of creation. He was still working, even sustaining and upholding His creation!

**Marvin Vincent** writes "The discussion turned on work on the Sabbath. The Father's work in maintaining and redeeming the world has continued from the creation until the present moment (ως πρι): until now, not interrupted by the Sabbath." ([John 5 Commentary](#))

The Jews were fully aware that Jesus was claiming full deity, and that He was equal with God (Jn 5:18). Notice the time phrase **until now** which signifies that more than one incidence of God's work and Jesus co-work was involved. Notice also He did not say *your Father* or *our Father* because God was not their Father and they sadly were not His children (Jn 1:11-13+)

The phrase "**My Father**" in the Gospels - 40x but 20x (50%) are in John followed by Matthew (14x) - Matt. 7:21; Matt. 8:21; Matt. 10:32; Matt. 10:33; Matt. 11:27; Matt. 12:50; Matt. 16:17; Matt. 18:10; Matt. 18:19; Matt. 20:23; Matt. 25:34; Matt. 26:39; Matt. 26:42; Matt. 26:53; Lk. 9:59; Lk. 10:22; Lk. 15:18; Lk. 22:29; Lk. 24:49; Jn. 5:17; Jn. 6:32; Jn. 6:40; Jn. 8:19; Jn. 8:38; Jn. 8:49; Jn. 8:54; Jn. 10:18; Jn. 10:29; Jn. 10:37; Jn. 14:7; Jn. 14:20; Jn. 14:21; Jn. 14:23; Jn. 15:1; Jn. 15:8; Jn. 15:15; Jn. 15:23; Jn. 15:24; Jn. 20:17. If one looks at just the Greek word for father ([pater](#)), Jesus calls God His Father 100x in John compared to 3x in Mark, 4x in Luke, and 31x in Matthew.

THOUGHT - Who do you say Jesus is? Do you see Him as equal with God the Father? You have only 2 choices - accept or reject. There is no middle ground ("He's a good teacher," etc). To make no choice is tantamount to rejecting Him. No choice is a bad choice, one you will regret forever and ever. Amen.

Now why is Jesus using the word **working**? What was it that the Jewish leaders accused Him of doing on the Sabbath? **Working!** And **working** was breaking their man-made rules! Not only that but Jesus has now made a statement that essentially is His claim of full deity! Jesus' point is that His **Father** did good work on the Sabbath (e.g., He would send rain for the crops and it even fell on the Sabbath!) It follows that if His **Father** does good work on the Sabbath, the Son can also do good work on the Sabbath! Even the Jews could not deny that they did some acts of mercy on the Sabbath (Jn 7:23+, Lk 14:5+), but they hypocritically tossed these aside so that they could criticize Jesus for *His* acts of mercy on the Sabbath! They were blind to their utter, ugly hypocrisy (that's the nature of hypocrisy - it does not reveal itself to the one it entangles!) An orthodox Jew would never have called God his personal **Father**, so Jesus' declaration of **My Father** is another blow to their false theology!

Take a pause and [look at Jensen's chart above \[at very top of page\]](#) find John 5 and note the section "**Years of Conflict**" (paralleled by "**PEOPLE'S UNBELIEF INTENSIFYING**", "**CONFLICT WITH THE JEWS**") and what you can clearly see is that John chapter 5 marks the beginning of the conflict with the Jewish leaders which would lead to His crucifixion!

**Osborne** explains that "The rabbis taught that only God can work on the Sabbath, alluding to the creative nature of God as part of his ceaseless activity in the world (Exodus Rabbah 30:6, so Barrett). At issue is the statement in Genesis 2:2 that God "rested from all his work" on the seventh day. But if he ceases working every Sabbath, how does the universe continue running? Therefore, God must work on the Sabbath. But then does he break his own law, becoming a Sabbath breaker? No, because as God he alone is exempt from this rule. Jesus' claim to work as well is tantamount to a claim to be God's equal. Moreover, he made his claim even more clear by stating that God was his Father. The Jews addressed God as "our Father" in their synagogue prayers, but Jesus "appeared to be claiming God as 'his own Father' in an exceptional, if not exclusive sense" (Bruce 1983:127). This was blasphemy to the leaders, so they tried "all the harder to find a way to kill him" (5:18). This is also the first time that their resolve to execute Jesus is mentioned. (See [The Gospel of John](#) scroll up and down for more text)

**W E Vine** adds that Jesus' answer "reveals the character of the sign just accomplished. It was one instance of **the co-work of the Father and the Son**. That God should break the sabbath law was impossible. In censuring the Son they were censuring the Father. The work of the Son was as indispensable as that of the Father, and was the Father's work. The declaration exposed at once the untenable character of their position." ([The Collected Writings of W.E. Vine](#)) (Bolding Added)

**Marvin Vincent** - The discussion turned on work on the Sabbath. The Father's work in maintaining and redeeming the world has continued from the creation until the present moment (  $\omega\varsigma\ \rho\tau\iota$ ): *until now*, not interrupted by the Sabbath. And I work (  $\kappa\gamma\ \rho\gamma\ \zeta\omicron\mu\alpha\iota$ ) Or, *I also work*. The two clauses are coordinated. The relation, as Meyer observes, is **not that of imitation, or example, but of equality of will and procedure**. Jesus does not violate the divine ideal of the Sabbath by His holy activity on that day. "*Man's true rest is not a rest from human, earthly labor, but a rest for divine, heavenly labor. Thus the merely negative, traditional observance of the Sabbath is placed in sharp contrast with the positive, final fulfillment of spiritual service, for which it was a preparation*" (Westcott) ([John 5 Commentary](#))

**ESV Study Bible (borrow)** - While Ge 2:2-3+ teaches that God rested (Hebrew [shabbath](#)) on the seventh day of creation, Jewish rabbis agreed that God continually upholds the universe (**ED**: CF Heb 1:3+), yet **without breaking the Sabbath**. In John 7:22-23 Jesus makes a different argument about healing on the Sabbath.

**John MacArthur** comments that Jn 5:1-7:52 "evidences the shift from reservation and hesitation about Jesus as Messiah (Jn 3:26; Jn 4:1-3) to outright rejection (Jn 7:52). The opposition started with controversy regarding Jesus' healing on the Sabbath (Jn 5:1-18), intensified in chap. 6 with many of His disciples abandoning Him (Jn 6:66), and finally hardened in chap. 7 into official opposition against Him with the religious authorities' unsuccessful attempt to arrest Him (Jn 7:20-52). Accordingly, the theme of this section is the rejection of Jesus as Messiah. (Borrow [The MacArthur Study Bible](#))

**Spurgeon's Exposition** - The whole work of nature is continued on Sabbath-days as well as other days. Stars shine through the Sabbath-night, and the sun rises and sets on the Lord's-day as on all the days of the week. God's work continues. "My Father worketh," saith Christ, "and I work." "My work is my Father's work, and that goes on whatever the day may be."

**Henry Morris** - worketh hitherto. In answer to the charge that He had broken the Sabbath by healing the crippled man at Bethesda on that day, Jesus noted that both He and His Father had been working continuously, the inference being that They had been doing this all through history. This fact in no way contradicted the revelation that "on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made" (Genesis 2:2). God rested from His work of creation, for it was complete, and the weekly Sabbath ("rest") day was ordained to commemorate that fact. He then began His work of

**conserving** what He had **created**. Thus, He is now "upholding all things by the word of his power" (Hebrews 1:3; Colossians 1:16; 2 Peter 3:7). In addition, when sin entered God's "very good" creation (Genesis 1:31), God also entered on His long work of redeeming His cursed and disintegrating creation (Romans 8:20-23). It was perfectly proper, therefore, for the Lord Jesus to "do good" (Luke 6:9+) on the Sabbath day. It should be emphasized, however, that God's ongoing work of conservation and redemption in no way suggests that He was also continuing His primeval work of creation, as modern **theistic evolutionists** argue. The Bible is clear that God's creative "works were finished from the foundation of the world" (Hebrews 4:3). (Borrow [The Defender's Study Bible](#))

**NET Note** - **"My Father is working until now, and I too am working."** What is the significance of Jesus' claim? A preliminary understanding can be obtained from John 5:18, noting the Jewish authorities' response and the author's comment. They sought to kill Jesus, because not only was he breaking the Sabbath, but he was also calling God his own Father, thus making himself equal with God. This must be seen in the context of the relation of God to the Sabbath rest. In the commandment (Exod 20:11) it is explained that "In six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth ... and rested on the seventh day; therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy." Philo, based on the LXX translation of Exod 20:11, denied outright that God had ever ceased his creative activity. And when Rabban Gamaliel II, R. Joshua, R. Eleazar ben Azariah, and R. Akiba were in Rome, ca. A.D. 95, they gave as a rebuttal to sectarian arguments evidence that God might do as he willed in the world without breaking the Sabbath because the entire world was his private residence. So even the rabbis realized that God did not really cease to work on the Sabbath: Divine providence remained active on the Sabbath, otherwise, all nature and life would cease to exist. As regards men, divine activity was visible in two ways: Men were born and men died on the Sabbath. Since only God could give life and only God could deal with the fate of the dead in judgment, this meant God was active on the Sabbath. This seems to be the background for Jesus' words in 5:17. He justified his work of healing on the Sabbath by reminding the Jewish authorities that they admitted God worked on the Sabbath. This explains the violence of the reaction. The Sabbath privilege was peculiar to God, and no one was equal to God. In claiming the right to work even as his Father worked, Jesus was claiming a divine prerogative. He was literally making himself equal to God, as 5:18 goes on to state explicitly for the benefit of the reader who might not have made the connection.

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**Working** (Accomplish, Do, Perform, Produce) (2038) **ergazomai** from **ergon** = work) means to engage in an activity involving considerable expenditure of effort. To work effectively. The NT uses **ergazomai** in a literal (to do manual labor) and figurative (especially spiritual - see below) sense. To labor, do work. **Ergazomai** speaks of "an action as something that stands in contrast to inactivity or talk." (Richards) **Ergazomai** "emphasizes the process of an action, carrying with this the ideas of continuity and repetition. It means "to labor, to be active, to perform," with the idea of continued exertion being included." **Ergazomai** is often used to describe work in a spiritual sense, implying supernatural work, work that God does, work that God (His Spirit indwelling believers) energizes in and through His children, work that lasts for all eternity! (Jn 5:17, 6:27, 9:4) Of godly sorrow which "works out" or accomplishes repentance (2Cor 7:10). Other spiritual work (1Cor 16:10, Heb 11:33). **Ergazomai** refers to "spiritual work" by men in a vain attempt to merit favor with God (Ro 4:4-5).

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### **James Smith - Handfuls of Purpose - I AND MY FATHER John 5:17-43**

The Gospel of John is the **"Holy of Holies"** in the tabernacle of the New Testament. John could no more invent the things taught in this book than he could make a ladder that would reach unto Heaven. **John's Gospel is the Gospel of "the Father and the Son," or the Son's relationship to the Father. With the exception of Matthew 11:27, this great theme is almost never touched by the other evangelists. This is "holy ground."**

Let us approach it, as it were,  
with humble and unshod feet.

From Christ's own lips we learn that—

**I. He was Loved by the Father.** "The Father loveth the Son, and sheweth Him all things that Himself doeth" (Jn 5:20). One of the proofs of this love is that He "sheweth Him all things that Himself doeth." The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into His hand (John 3:35). It is the manner of our gracious God to manifest His love by giving (John 3:16).

**II. He was Sent by the Father.** "The Father Himself hath sent Me" (Jn 5:37). Christ, as the Son, "proceeded forth, and came from God," but not of Himself, as independent of the Father's desire and purpose (chap. 8:42). "When the fullness of the time came, God sent forth His Son" (Gal. 4:4, R.V.). What a comfort this thought must have been to Him "in sorrow's lone hour." All Christ's servants are so sent (John 17:18).

**III. He Came in His Father's Name.** "I am come in My Father's Name" (Jn 5:43). He came as the Father's representative among men, and because of this "they received Him not." Men whose lives are opposed to God are always ready to receive those who come in their own name (Acts 5:36, 37). To come in His Father's Name implied that He also came in His Father's nature (John



14:10).

**IV. He Seeks to do the Will of His Father.** “I can of myself do nothing ... I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent Me” (Jn 5:30). His own will was so entirely submitted to the will of His Father that He could, or would, do nothing in the strength of it. His whole delight was to do the will of God, because His law was within His heart (Ps. 40:7, 8). His meat, the strength of His life, was to do the will of Him that sent Him (chap. 4:34). With Him it was, “Not as I will, but as Thou wilt,” at any cost (Mt. 26:39).

**V. He Followeth His Father’s Example.** “My Father worketh even until now, and I work. The Son can do ... what He seeth the Father doing” (Jn 5:17–19, R.V.). The Father knows no Sabbath in seeking the salvation of the lost, neither does the Son (Jn 5:16). The eyes of the Son, as a servant, were continually towards the Father, as His Master. The Father was Christ’s example, even as Christ is ours.

**VI. He Possesses the Father’s Prerogative of Life.** “As the Father hath life in Himself, so hath He given to the Son to have life in Himself” (Jn 5:26). The Father, who hath the life in Himself that is entirely independent of all circumstances, hath bequeathed the like inheritance to the Son, so the Son could say, “As I live by the Father, so he that eateth Me, even he shall live by Me” (John 6:57). Christ, our Life.

**VII. He Quickeneth whom the Father Will.** “As the Father raiseth up the dead ... even so the Son quickeneth whom He will” (Jn 5:21). Christ is “the resurrection and the life.” All that the Father hath given Him, through faith in His Name, are made alive from the dead. Neither the Father nor the Son will be disappointed with the final results of the great redemption.

**VIII. He Judgeth in the Father’s Stead.** “The Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son” (Jn 5:22). He hath given Him authority to execute judgment, because He is the Son of Man (Jn 5:27) Because Christ condescended to take upon Him “the likeness of man,” God hath appointed Him the Judge of all mankind (Acts 10:42). Either in grace or in judgment every knee shall bow in the Name of Jesus (Phil. 2:10). All the affairs of the kingdom of grace have been delegated to Him who gave Himself a ransom for all (1 Tim. 2:6; Acts 17:30).

**IX. He Claims Equality with the Father.** “All may honour the Son, even as they honour the Father (Jn 5:23, R.V.). He that honoureth not the Son, honoureth not the Father. He that hateth Me, hateth My Father also (John 15:23). I and My Father are one. Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father (1 John 2:23). The life, the character, and work of Jesus Christ were so vitally connected with the life, the character, and work of the Father that, in the estimation of both, they were one. Kiss the Son, and you will find your soul’s refuge in the bosom of the Father.

**John 5:18 For this reason 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.**

BGT John 5:18 δι το το ο ν μ λλον ζ τουν α τ ν ο ουδα οι ποκτε ναι, τι ο μ νον λυεν τ σ ββατον, λλ κα πατ ρα διον λεγεν τ ν θε ν σον αυτ ν ποι ν τ θε .

KJV John 5:18 Therefore the Jews sought the more to kill him, because he not only had broken the sabbath, but said also that God was his Father, making himself equal with God.

NET John 5:18 For this reason the Jewish leaders were trying even harder to kill him, because not only was he breaking the Sabbath, but he was also calling God his own Father, thus making himself equal with God.

CSB John 5:18 This is why the Jews began trying 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.

ESV John 5:18 This was why the Jews were seeking all the more to kill him, because not only was he breaking the Sabbath, but he was even calling God his own Father, making himself equal with God.

NIV John 5:18 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.

NLT John 5:18 So the Jewish leaders tried all the harder to find a way to kill him. For he not only broke the Sabbath, he called God his Father, thereby making himself equal with God.

NRS John 5:18 For this reason the Jews were seeking all the more to kill him, because he was not only breaking the sabbath, but was also calling God his own Father, thereby making himself equal to God.



- **the Jews:** Jn 7:19
- **breaking:** Jn 7:22,23 Mt 12:5
- **God His own Father:** Jn 5:23, Jn 8:54,58, Jn 10:30,33 14:9,23 Zec 13:7 Php 2:6 Rev 21:22,23 Rev 22:1,3
- [John 5 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passages:

[See notes above](#) on Ex 31:12-17+ and Nu 15:32-36+ which explain why the Jews might seek to kill Jesus.

John 8:58-59+ Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was born, **I am.**" 59 Therefore (CRITICAL TERM OF CONCLUSION) they picked up stones to throw at Him (WHY? THEY KNEW EXACTLY WHAT HE HAD SAID - "I AM GOD"!), but Jesus hid Himself and went out of the temple.

John 10:30-38+ "**I and the Father are one.**" 31 The Jews picked up stones again to stone Him. 32 Jesus answered them, "I showed you many good works from the Father; for which of them are you stoning Me?" 33 The Jews answered Him, "For a good work we do not stone You, but for blasphemy; and because You, being a man, make Yourself out to be God." 34 Jesus answered them, "Has it not been written in your Law, 'I SAID, YOU ARE GODS'?' 35 "If he called them gods, to whom the word of God came (and the Scripture cannot be broken), 36 do you say of Him, whom the Father sanctified and sent into the world, 'You are blaspheming,' because I said, '**I am the Son of God**'? 37 "If I do not do the works of My Father, do not believe Me; 38 but if I do them, though you do not believe Me, believe the works, so that you may know and understand that the **Father is in Me, and I in the Father.**" 39 Therefore they were seeking again to seize Him, and He eluded their grasp.

Philippians 2:6-7+ Who (JESUS), although He existed in the form of God, did not regard **equality** ([isos](#)) with God a thing to be grasped, but **emptied Himself** ("[kenosis](#)"), taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men.

## SABBATH BREAKER CLAIMS DEITY

**For this reason therefore** - A "double" term of conclusion. Why? What conclusion?

**The Jews were seeking** ([zeteo](#)) **all the more to kill** ([apokteino](#)) **Him** - NLT = "tried all the harder to find a way to kill him" **Seeking** is in the imperfect tense picturing this as occurring again and again. Their crusade against Jesus had begun! The bloodhounds were unleashed! In Jn 5:16 we see the Jewish authorities were persecuting Jesus, but now we see that their hatred grew to the point of seeking to murder Him. They could not refute His miracles, so they sought to kill the Miracle Worker.

**A T Robertson** on **were seeking** ([zeteo](#)) - Imperfect active of [zeteo](#). **graphic picture of increased and untiring effort "to kill him"** (auton apokteinai, first aorist active, to kill him off and be done with him). John repeats this clause "they sought to kill him" in John 7:1, 19, 25; John 8:37, 40. Their own blood was up on this Sabbath issue and they bend every energy to put Jesus to death. ([John 5 Commentary](#))

**Because** - Term of explanation. What is John explaining? How does he explain their evil desire to kill God? Two reasons.

**He not only was breaking** ([luo](#)) **the Sabbath** ([sabbaton](#)) - The Jewish leaders held Jesus guilty of breaking their ridiculous rules and regulations regarding the Sabbath, but He was not breaking God's commandment regarding the Sabbath. In the opinion of the Jews, this would have been enough to kill Jesus for they undoubtedly would refer to the Law of Moses which said "you are to observe the sabbath, for it is holy to you. **Everyone who profanes it shall surely be put to death** for whoever does any work on it, that person shall be cut off from among his people." (Ex 31:14+)

**A T Robertson** on **was breaking** ([luo](#)) - Imperfect active of [luo](#). He was now a common and regular Sabbath-breaker. [Luo](#) means to loosen, to set at naught. The papyri give examples of [luo](#) in this sense like *luein ta penthē* (to break the period of mourning). This was the first grudge against Jesus, but His defense had made the offence worse and had given them a far graver charge. ([John 5 Commentary](#))

**But - But** is a term of contrast. Why a contrast in this passage? It was one thing to break the Sabbath of God (as the legalistic Jews interpreted the Sabbath) **BUT** it was quite another thing for Him to say He was God! And it is notable that Jesus says nothing else about the Sabbath in His lengthy discourse, but gives profound insights into His relationship to His Father. And remember that He is

addressing the Jewish leaders and the truth that He will tell them will harden their resolve even more to kill Him. Had they received this incredible discourse as "gospel truth," they would have been saved, so it is as if Jesus is showing grace and mercy to give them a chance. Sadly, they would have none of it, and from here on to the end of His life the die was cast that He must die on the cross!

**Also was calling God His own Father ([pater](#)), making Himself equal ([isos](#)) with God** - Jesus was not calling Him "our Father," but "My Father," and the Jews knew exactly what He meant! Jesus did not stutter when He made this claim of deity. How often I hear skeptics say that Jesus never claimed He was God. Clearly they have never read His words, for He repeatedly claimed to be God. Their ignorance will not be bliss in eternity future! One clear proof of His claim is the response from the Jews seeking to kill Him. The Jewish leaders knew exactly Who Jesus was claiming to be and thus accused Him of [blasphemy](#), an offense punishable by death. Even Jesus' use of the title "**Son of God**" indicated that He was stating He was equal with God.

This recalls John's purpose - "Therefore many other signs Jesus also performed in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; but these have been written **so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God**; and that believing you may have life in His name." (John 20:30-31)

**John MacArthur** sums up some of the NT evidence that Jesus was God - Jesus assumed the prerogatives of deity. He claimed to have control over people's eternal destinies (Jn 8:24; cf. Luke 12:8-9; John 5:22, 27-29), to have authority over the divinely ordained institution of the Sabbath (Matt. 12:8; Mark 2:28; Luke 6:5), to have the power to answer prayer (John 14:13-14; cf. Acts 7:59; 9:10-17), and to have the right to receive worship, faith, and obedience due to God alone (Matt. 21:16; John 14:1; cf. John 5:23). He also assumed the right to forgive sins (Mark 2:5-11)—something that, as His shocked opponents correctly understood, only God can do (v. 7). Jesus also called God's angels (Gen. 28:12; Luke 12:8-9; 15:10; John 1:51) His angels (Matt. 13:41; 24:30-31); God's elect (Luke 18:7; Rom. 8:33) His elect (Matt. 24:30-31); and God's kingdom (Matt. 12:28; 19:24; 21:31; Mark 1:15; Luke 4:43; John 3:3) His kingdom (Matt. 13:41; 16:28; cf. Luke 1:33; 2 Tim. 4:1). (See [Making Himself Equal with God](#))

**MacArthur** in [another source](#) writes "Those who would deny that Jesus claimed to be God must deny the historical accuracy and truthfulness of the gospel records and thereby establish themselves as superior sources of truth. They are saying they know more about what was true two thousand years ago than the inspired eyewitnesses. Such skepticism is unwarranted, however, since **the New Testament is by far the most well-attested document of the ancient world** (cf. [F. F. Bruce, The New Testament Documents: Are They Reliable? - see pdf](#)). Skeptics are also hard-pressed to explain why Jesus' monotheistic Jewish followers would have embraced His deity so early in church history apart from His own claims. (**ED: AND I WOULD ADD WHAT THE MONOTHEISTIC JEWISH ANTAGONISTS WOULD SEEK TO KILL HIM - THEY KNEW EXACTLY WHAT HE WAS CLAIMING!**)

**William L Craig** adds "Within twenty years of the crucifixion a full-blown Christology proclaiming Jesus as God incarnate existed. How does one explain this worship by monotheistic Jews of one of their countrymen as God incarnate, apart from the claims of Jesus Himself?... If Jesus never made any such claims, then the belief of the earliest Christians in this regard becomes inexplicable." (Borrow [Apologetics: An Introduction](#)).

**Blum** - To make oneself "**equal with God**" was a claim of arrogant independence. In the Talmud four persons were branded as haughty because they made themselves equal to God: pagan rulers Hiram, Nebuchadnezzar, Pharaoh, and the Jewish King Joash.

*Jesus gives a powerful apologetic in defence of His claim to equality with the Father*

-- John 5:19-47

**A T Robertson** on **making Himself equal ([isos](#)) with God** - [Isos](#) is an old common adjective (in papyri also) and means equal. In Phil. 2:6 Paul calls the Pre-incarnate Christ *isa theōi*, "equal to God" (plural [isa](#), attributes of God).....Certainly the Jews understood Jesus to claim equality with the Father in nature and privilege and power as also in John 10:33; John 19:7. Besides, if the Jews misunderstood Jesus on this point, it was open and easy for Him to deny it and to clear up the misapprehension. This is precisely what He does not do. On the contrary Jesus gives a powerful apologetic in defence of his claim to equality with the Father (John 5:19-47). ([John 5 Commentary](#)) (Bolding added)

**J Vernon McGee** comments that "**Making himself equal with God**" is a clear-cut claim to deity. I have heard the liberals say that the Bible does not teach the deity of Christ. I don't know what those men are talking about. I feel they are either woefully ignorant or they are absolutely dishonest. You may disagree with the Lord Jesus, and you may disagree with the Bible, but how can you put any other construction on these plain words, "**making himself equal with God**"? If that isn't claiming deity, then I do not know how a person would be able to claim deity. ([John 5 Commentary](#) or BORROW [Gospel of John Volume 1](#))

[ESV Study Bible \(borrow\)](#) - Jesus was claiming to be the Son of God , not in the way that ordinary human believers are sons of

God (**ED**: THE PHRASE "SON OF GOD" IS USED ONLY OF JESUS, WHILE "SONS OF GOD" REFER TO BELIEVERS - Mt 5:9, Ro 8:14, 19, Gal 3:26) but in the sense of one who was equal to God in his nature and in every way, yet who related to God in a Father-Son relationship (see note on John 1:14). If Jesus had been merely a man (as his Jewish opponents thought), then this claim would have been **blasphemy** on Jesus' part.

[GotQuestions.org](#) In John 5:18 the Jewish religious leaders wanted to kill Jesus because He was claiming deity and equality with God (**ED**: AND BREAKING THEIR MADE-UP SABBATH RULES). They were correct in this accusation (John 1:1–2; 5:17; 8:58). The Jews rightly understood that, when Jesus said, "My Father is always at his work . . . , and I too am working" (John 5:17), He made Himself equal to God. He spoke of Himself as if He were on the same level as God, and He professed a special relationship with God—He said, "**My** Father," not "**our** Father." **The Jews considered Jesus to be guilty of blasphemy in three ways:** 1) Jesus called God His "Father," 2) He worked in tandem with God, and 3) He asserted the same authority to work on the Sabbath as God has. It is notable that **Jesus did not correct them**; He accepted the accusation that He had claimed deity for Himself.

**Gilbrant** - The religious leaders accused Jesus of "making himself equal ([isos](#)) with God," that is, to have the same authority as God (John 5:18). The Jews were correct in their assessment. This is exactly the claim Jesus was making for himself. Later, in John 8:12-59, He made an even bolder statement: "Before Abraham was, **I AM**" (John 8:58) (**ED**: TO WHICH THEY REACTED SEEKING TO KILL HIM - Jn 8:59). Notice also the claim of Scripture in John 1:1-5. The Jewish religious leaders resented Jesus' claims. They understood perfectly what Jesus was saying. Jesus did not assume merely a relationship to the Father equal to that of His followers. He never said, "**Our** Father" (except when He taught the disciples to pray). He always referred to "**My** Father" in a unique sense, indicating a relationship which cannot be applied to any other being in the universe....It is amazing how the Saviour and God of their fathers could stand before them in calmness and longsuffering. The majesty of His person and His love in the presence of His antagonists were evidence that He possessed the glory of His Father. ([Complete Biblical Library](#))

[Spurgeon's Exposition](#) - They did not understand him to preach [Unitarianism](#); they understood him to proclaim His own true and proper Godhead, and He never contradicted them, for He was God.

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**Equal** ([2470](#))(*isos*) Equal, alike in quantity, quality or dignity (Mt. 20:12; Lk 6:34; Jn 5:18), of nature and conditions (Acts 11:17; Rev. 21:16), consistent, the same. Consistent referring to testimony (Mk. 14:56, 59).

**Zodhiates** - In the neut. pl., *ísa* is used as an adverb as in Phil. 2:6 where it modifies the articular infinitive *tó eínai*, "to be equal with God." Jesus did not consider the action of being **equal** to God, i.e., maintaining a state of being **equal** to God, as an act of robbery. Here *ísa* *Theó* (*ísa*, pl.; *Theó*, dat. sing. of *Theós*, God) is similar to John 5:18 where *íson*, the acc. sing., is used. *Ísa* in the neut. pl. as in Phil. 2:6 better corresponds to "as" than to "equal to." (Borrow [The Complete Word Study Dictionary: New Testament](#) - excellent resource).

**Vine** adds **isos** means "the same in size, number, quality," etc., is translated "equal" in John 5:18; Phil. 2:6; in the latter the word is in the neuter plural, lit., "equalities;" "in the RV the words are translated 'on an equality with God,' instead of 'equal with God,' as in the AV. The change is of great importance to the right interpretation of the whole passage. The rendering 'equal with God,' is evidently derived from the Latin Version. ... It was apparently due at first to the fact that the Latin language had no adequate mode of representing the exact form and meaning of the Greek. The neuter plural denotes the various modes or states in which it was possible for the nature of Deity to exist and manifest itself as Divine." \* [\* Gifford, *The Incarnation*, p. 20.] ([Vine's Expository Dictionary of Old Testament and New Testament Words](#))

**Gilbrant - Classical Greek** This common term in antiquity occurs from the time of Homer (ca. Seventh Century B.C.) onward. Its most common meaning is "equal, alike." From this, *isos* could serve in various capacities. *Isos* can mean "equal" in qualitative terms such as "fair treatment." In quantitative terms *isos* can refer to equal proportions (see Liddell-Scott; Stählin, "isos," *Kittel*, 3:343). Stählin suggests that "qualitative" is perhaps not the best term to use. He offers in its place equality of value. In mathematical propositions *isos* especially denotes the exact quality shared between quantities (*ibid.*, 3:345).

In early Greek culture and literature centers, another aspect of the use of the term *isos* was felt on social and philosophical implications of the nature of "equality." There existed a belief that equality between men was a function of some harmonizing cosmic principle that operated within the universe. However, the attempt to create a society where all men were equal went one step further in that the idea of equality began to extend toward the gods. Hero worship in the Greek culture is an evidence that a "divinity of man" concept was present. In fact, heroes were referred to as *isotheos*, i.e., "like god."

This concept points to one of the deepest differences between Greek philosophy and the religion of Israel. Throughout the entire Old Testament the rhetorical question resounds, "Who is like God!" Clearly, there is

none in heaven or on earth who is like the God of Israel. (Cf. Psalm 89:6 [LXX 88:7], “Who in the heaven can be compared unto the Lord? Who among the sons of the mighty can be likened unto the Lord?”; the Septuagint shows *isoō*, the verb form.) In Jewish thought, it was the very fact that man sought to be like God which led to the Fall in the Garden of Eden. The temptation brought to Eve by the serpent was, “Ye shall be as gods” (cf. Genesis 3:5). The desire for autonomy from God and equality with Him describes the origin as well as the goal of all sin.

**Septuagint Usage** The Septuagint translators enlisted *isos* to translate nine Hebrew words. In the majority of instances, however, one finds either *’echādh* or the prepositional prefix *k<sup>e-</sup>*, “like, as,” behind *isos*. It refers to equal amounts or measurements (Exodus 30:34; cf. Ezekiel 40:5ff.), or figuratively it speaks of “shared or common feeling” (literally “equal to your own soul”; Deuteronomy 13:6). *Isos* functions as “like” or “as” on a regular basis (e.g., Job 13:12,28). The concept of shared essence—that in which all humanity is *isos*—is reflected in the apocryphal Wisdom of Solomon (7:1,3,6). There appear to be few, if any, theological nuances associated with the actual occurrences of this term in the Septuagint. But as described above the concept of man’s desire for achieving “equality” with God is clearly evident in the Old Testament.

**New Testament Usage** In the New Testament *isos* occurs eight times and follows the classical and Septuagintal patterns of understanding. “Equal” can refer to the same treatment (Matthew 20:12; cf. Luke 6:34); to the fact that the false witnesses’ testimonies against Jesus were not equal, i.e., they were not the same (Mark 14:56,59); to equal measurements (Revelation 21:16); or to the identical gift (Acts 11:17).

**Only twice are there any theological associations with *isos*.** The religious leaders accused Jesus of “making himself equal (*isos*) with God,” that is, to have the same authority as God (John 5:18). The Jews were correct in their assessment. This is exactly the claim Jesus was making for himself. Later, in John 8:12-59, He made an even bolder statement: “Before Abraham was, I am” (John 8:58). Notice also the claim of Scripture in John 1:1-5. The Jewish religious leaders resented Jesus’ claims.

The other quite difficult text in which *isos* occurs is Philippians 2:6. The issue of the text does not revolve around *isos* per se, but *harpagmos* (719), “prize, robbery, something to be clung to” (cf. Bauer and word study on *harpagmos*). ([Complete Biblical Library](#))

**Isos - 8v - consistent(2), equal(3), equality(1), same(2).** Matt. 20:12; Mk. 14:56; Mk. 14:59; Lk. 6:34; Jn. 5:18; Acts 11:17; Phil. 2:6; Rev. 21:16

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#### QUESTION - [What does it mean that Jesus made Himself equal with God \(John 5:18\)?](#)

**ANSWER** - Jesus heals a lame man [on the Sabbath](#) in John 5, and that caused the Jewish leaders to persecute Jesus. “In his defense Jesus said to them, ‘My Father is always at his work to this very day, and I too am working’” (John 5:17). This statement raised the leaders’ anger to a fever pitch: “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” (John 5:18).

**The identity of Jesus is critical to understanding the Christian faith, and it’s a topic that the Gospel of John sheds much light on.** In fact, it’s the first topic John addresses in his book: “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God” (John 1:1). John describes the Word (Jesus) as “with God”—distinct from God the Father in some way—yet, at the same time, Jesus *is* God. In addition, Jesus was “in the beginning,” pointing the reader back to Genesis 1:1. Jesus has always existed as one of the three Persons of the Trinity. Jesus’ words in John 5 making Himself equal with God were a simple reflection of reality.

In John 5:18 the Jewish religious leaders wanted to kill Jesus because He was claiming deity and equality with God. They were correct in this accusation (John 1:1–2; 5:17; 8:58). The Jews rightly understood that, when Jesus said, “My Father is always at his work . . . , and I too am working” (John 5:17), He made Himself equal to God. He spoke of Himself as if He were on the same level as God, and He professed a special relationship with God—He said, “*My* Father,” not “*our* Father.” The Jews considered Jesus to be guilty of blasphemy in three ways: 1) Jesus called God His “Father,” 2) He worked in tandem with God, and 3) He asserted the same authority to work on the Sabbath as God has. It is notable that Jesus did not correct them; He accepted the accusation that He had claimed deity for Himself.

That was not the only time Jesus laid claim to deity. In John 8:58 Jesus claims to have existed [before Abraham](#). As Abraham lived roughly 2,000 years prior to Jesus making the claim, the only way Jesus’ claim could be true is if He is God. Not only that, but Jesus makes the claim by identifying as “I am.” This is the name of God spoken to Moses at the burning bush. It was the name Moses provided to the Hebrew people when asked who sent him to free them from Egypt (Exodus 3:14). In saying He was the I Am who existed before Abraham, Jesus was clearly making Himself God, and the unbelieving Jews responded accordingly—“They picked up

stones to stone him" (John 8:59).

The Jewish leaders in John 5 started with the false premise that Jesus is *not* God in the flesh. They refused to entertain the thought, even after seeing the miracle He performed. So they were offended by His words and the fact that He had healed on the Sabbath. But Jesus simply presented Himself as He is. [He is God](#). The Jews accused Jesus of making Himself equal with God as if He were a charlatan trying to boost Himself into that position. They missed the truth that Jesus, as the Son of God, has always been God.

There were other witnesses to the deity of Jesus. John the Baptist (John 5:33–35), Jesus' own works (John 5:36), God the Father (John 5:37–38), and the Scriptures (John 5:39–47). Jesus' deity is also attested in Hebrews 1:1–3; Colossians 1:15–17; Ephesians 1:3–14; and Philippians 2:1–11.

Jesus' deity is a central aspect of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Jesus provides those who believe in Him with the righteousness of God (2 Corinthians 5:21). He can do this because He *is* God and therefore has the righteousness of God to give. Jesus, God the Son, took on flesh and walked sinlessly among His creations, was wrongfully killed by them, and rose again so they may have the righteousness of God and eternal life. This is the [good news](#) of Jesus Christ. [GotQuestions.org](#)

**John 5:19 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.**

BGT John 5:19 περὶ νατο ο ν ἡσο ς κα λέγεν α το ς· μ ν μ ν λ γω μ ν, ο ὄ ναται υ ς ποιε ν φ αυτο ο ὄ ν ν μ τι βλ π τ ν πατ ρα ποιο ντα· γ ρ ν κε νο ς ποι , τα τα κα υ ς μο ως ποιε .

KJV John 5:19 Then answered Jesus and said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do: for what things soever he doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise.

NET John 5:19 So Jesus answered them, "I tell you the solemn truth, the Son can do nothing on his own initiative, but only what he sees the Father doing. For whatever the Father does, the Son does likewise.

CSB John 5:19 Then Jesus replied, " I assure you: The Son is not able to do anything on His own, but only what He sees the Father doing. For whatever the Father does, the Son also does these things in the same way.

ESV John 5:19 So Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of his own accord, but only what he sees the Father doing. For whatever the Father does, that the Son does likewise.

NIV John 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.

NLT John 5:19 So Jesus explained, "I tell you the truth, the Son can do nothing by himself. He does only what he sees the Father doing. Whatever the Father does, the Son also does.

NRS John 5:19 Jesus said to them, "Very truly, I tell you, the Son can do nothing on his own, but only what he sees the Father doing; for whatever the Father does, the Son does likewise.

YLT John 5:19 Jesus therefore responded and said to them, 'Verily, verily, I say to you, The Son is not able to do anything of himself, if he may not see the Father doing anything; for whatever things He may do, these also the Son in like manner doth;

- Therefore Jesus answered: Jn 5:21,25,26, with, Eph 1:18,19 2:5
- **and was saying to them:** Jn 5:28,29 11:25,26, with, Ro 8:11 2Co 4:14 Php 3:21 1Th 4:14 Ps 27:14 138:3 Isa 45:24, with, 2Co 12:9,10 Eph 3:16 Php 4:13 Col 1:11 Ex 4:11 Pr 2:6, with, Lu 21:15 Jer 17:10, with, Rev 2:23
- **Truly, truly:** Jn 5:24,25 3:3
- **The Son:** Jn 5:30 Jn 8:28 Jn 9:4 Jn 12:49 Jn 14:10,20
- **for:** Jn 14:16-23 Ge 1:1,26 Isa 44:24 Col 1:16, Compare, Jn 5:22, with, Ps 50:6 2Co 5:10 Jn 2:19 10:18, with, Ac 2:24 Ro 6:4 1Co 15:12 1Pe 3:18
- [John 5 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**Related Passages:**



John 4:34 Jesus \*said to them, **“My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me** and to accomplish His work.

John 5:30 **“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.

John 7:17 “If anyone is willing to do His will, he will know of the teaching, **whether it is of God or whether I speak from Myself.**

John 8:28 So Jesus said, “When you lift up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am He, and **I do nothing on My own initiative,** but I speak these things as the Father taught Me.

John 9:4 **“We must work the works of Him who sent Me** as long as it is day; night is coming when no one can work.

John 12:49 **“For I did not speak on My own initiative,** but the Father Himself who sent Me has given Me a commandment as to what to say and what to speak.

John 14:10 “Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father is in Me? **The words that I say to you I do not speak on My own initiative,** but the Father abiding in Me does His works.

John 16:13 (SPIRIT NOT ACTING ON OWN INITIATIVE) “But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all the truth; for **He will not speak on His own initiative,** but whatever He hears, He will speak; and He will disclose to you what is to come.

John 3:11 “Truly, truly, I say to you, we speak of what we know and testify of **what we have seen,** and you do not accept our testimony.

John 3:32 **“What He has seen** and heard, of that He testifies; and no one receives His testimony.

John 8:38 **“I speak the things which I have seen** with My Father; therefore you also do the things which you heard from your father.”

## **"LIKE FATHER, LIKE SON!" JESUS IS EQUAL WITH GOD**

In this next section Jesus will clearly explain to the antagonistic Jews that He is the epitome of the saying we have today "Like Father, like Son!" He will even offer them a way out of their evil and spiritual darkness in John 5:24!

**W E Vine** observes that based on the Jewish leaders accusations above **"The way is now open for the most comprehensive public witness given by the Lord concerning the Father and Himself and Their dealings with man, both now and hereafter."** ([The Collected Writings of W.E. Vine](#))

**Grant Osborne** on **John 5:19-30** - The rest of this section (Jn 5:19-30) clarifies the right of Jesus to claim equality with God. Jesus' response is that the power of life and judgment belong only to God, yet they have been turned over to the Son. Jesus addresses two aspects of this reality: realized eschatology in Jn 5:19-24 (i.e., these powers are his now), and final eschatology in Jn 5:25-30 (i.e., He controls the final judgment, so Brown). In Jn 5:19, we have what Lightfoot calls a **"defense of Christian monotheism"**: **Jesus does not act independently of the Father but rather is at all times dependent on Him.** He is equal yet in His incarnate state **"does only what He sees the Father doing."** (See [The Gospel of John](#) - scroll up and down for more text) (BOLDING Added)

**Charles Swindoll** introduces John 5:19-30 with this thought - When Jesus went to the pool of Bethesda in Jerusalem and chose to heal a superstitious invalid, He knew it would attract the attention of the religious authorities. Sure enough, after scolding the man for carrying his pallet, they hunted Jesus down and denounced Him for violating their rules. **Their real purpose was to eliminate a threat to their authority;** however, they masked their true intent by pretending to uphold God's preeminence in the Sabbath. Jesus didn't avoid the surface issue. He first corrected their faulty theology, and then He addressed the real question at hand: *Who owns the Sabbath?* The Lord answered that question with six specific claims:

- He is equal with God (Jn 5:19-20),
- He is the Giver of life (Jn 5:21, 26),
- He is the final Judge (Jn 5:22-23),
- He will determine the eternal destiny of humanity (Jn 5:24),
- He will raise the dead (Jn 5:25-29), and
- He is always doing the will of God (Jn 5:30). (Borrow [Swindoll's Insights on John](#)) (Bolding Added)



Note that John 5:19-47 introduces the longest discourse addressed to the hostile Jews in all the Gospels. The only discourse that is longer is to His disciples (Jn 14:23-16:16).

**Michaels** notes that the purpose of this lengthy discourse "is to explain in detail the brief riddle, "My Father is working even until now, and I am working" (Jn 5:17), so as to refute his opponents and at the same time instruct the Gospel's readers." (Borrow [The Gospel of John](#))

It is notable that the Jews make no (recorded) verbal response to Jesus' discourse! Of course there was the response of rising hatred toward Him.

**Therefore** - Term of conclusion. What is Jesus concluding? This is difficult to determine. As in John 5:17 where it says "Jesus answered them" but there is no statement or question by them (the Jews), and in this verse we see that there is no statement or question by the Jews in the previous verse. John says they were seeking to kill Him. One thought is they asked Him a question not recorded. Or they lodged a complaint not recorded. Or that He read their minds that they were seeking to kill Him and offers the following conclusion which is in essence an explanation or elaboration of His relationship to His Father and His authority to heal on the Sabbath.

**Jesus answered and was saying to them, "Truly, truly (amen, amen), I say to you - Them** of course is the hostile Jewish leaders. "Listen! Listen!" Pay close attention! "The double seal of verity, "**Amen, amen,**" is combined with the voice of authority, "**I say to you**" (Lenski) should have shocked the Jewish leaders. It is interesting that 3 words speak of Jesus' speech -**answer, was saying, I say,** marking this as a **discourse**. The repetition of **truly (amen)** is Jesus' way of saying I guarantee you that what I am about to say is absolutely true and it is very important! This is the first of three double amens in this important discourse - Jn 5:19, 24, 25.

**Amen** is a response to something that has just been said, except in Jesus' teachings. Jesus, the ultimate "Amen" (Rev 3:14+), is the supreme authority and so it is clearly apropos that His teachings be **introduced by amen**. John's Gospel has 25 uses of "amen" and every use is a double **amen** (or double "**truly**"). None of the synoptic Gospels use a "double amen." It is also notable that in the four Gospels, **amen** is used only by our Lord Jesus Christ, almost always "to introduce new revelations of the mind of God." (Vine) Every use of "**amen**" or "**truly**" by Jesus serves to affirm what follows and by extension to cause us to pay close attention to the teaching. The Pauline uses of **amen** occur primarily at the close of his prayers or doxologies, and as such serve to confirm them as "it is firm" (or "so let it be").

**All 25 uses of Truly, Truly (only in John's Gospel)** - Jn. 1:51; Jn. 3:3; Jn. 3:5; Jn. 3:11; Jn. 5:19; Jn. 5:24; Jn. 5:25; Jn. 6:26; Jn. 6:32; Jn. 6:47; Jn. 6:53; Jn. 8:34; Jn. 8:51; Jn. 8:58; Jn. 10:1; Jn. 10:7; Jn. 12:24; Jn. 13:16; Jn. 13:20; Jn. 13:21; Jn. 13:38; Jn. 14:12; Jn. 16:20; Jn. 16:23; Jn. 21:18

*Jesus is saying it is impossible for Him to act independently of His Father's will*

**The Son can (dunamai** - present tense - continually) **do** (absolutely) **nothing of Himself** (cf Jn 5:30; Jn 7:28; Jn 8:28; Jn 14:10) - What is Jesus saying here? One thing is clear -- Jesus and the Father are in such an intimate relationship that whatever Jesus does (e.g., healing the lame man) is in perfect harmony with what the Father does. Jesus is neither independent of the Father and what He does is not self-initiated. In other words, Jesus is saying it is impossible for Him to act independently of His Father. The two always work together. Jesus is describing the intimacy and unbroken communion He has possessed throughout eternity with His Father. We also see Jesus' **subordination to the Father**, since He does what He **sees the Father doing** and later says His authority is **given** to Him by the Father (Jn 5:22). So in this section we have the divine mystery of the Son being co-equal with the Father (Jn 5:18) and yet subordinate to Him.

*Jesus, being one with God, can do nothing apart from Him.*

-- Marvin Vincent

**Rodney Whitacre** - He is completely dependent upon the Father (**ED: subordination to the Father**). In this expression of humility, obedience and dependence we see the Semitic version of the ideal son, since a son is to reproduce his father's thought and action....His source of being and activity is not Himself but His Father. He cannot act from Himself, for to do so would be to exist autonomously from God. There is one who is autonomous, namely, the devil (Jn 8:44, Isa 14:12-16). The Son is distinct from the Father (or He would not be the Son), but He is not autonomous. ([Jesus Delivers His Keynote Address: The Revelation of the Father's Son Jn 5:19-30](#))

**POSB** - He did exactly what He saw the Father do. There was no divergence whatsoever between the Father and Jesus. There are three claims here. (1) Jesus was in perfect, unbroken communion with God. (2) Jesus was of the very same nature and person as God. (3) Jesus acted as God because He was God: He did exactly what God did. He did "the very same things" (tauta) in "the very

same manner" ([homoios](#)). He acted and behaved exactly as God acted and behaved. ([The Preacher's outline & sermon Bible](#) - BORROW)

**A T Robertson on the Son can do nothing of Himself** - True in a sense of every man (cf Jn 15:5), but in a much deeper sense of Christ because of the intimate relation between him and the Father. See this same point in Jn 5:30; 7:28; 8:28; 14:10. Jesus had already made it in Jn 5:17. Now he repeats and defends it. ([Word Pictures of the New Testament](#))

**THOUGHT** - Oh, how this truth should amaze and humble and break us, if necessary, of any sense of self-sufficiency (cf 2Co 3:5-6+), that we could accomplish any of the Father's will on earth as it is in Heaven apart from total reliance on His Holy Spirit (Zech 4:6+) and constant abiding in His Son (Jn 15:5+). Lord, deliver us from futile **self**-initiated and **self**-energized works that may look "spiritual," but are accounted as nothing before Your Holy eyes! In Jesus' Name. Amen.

**Unless it is something He sees** ([blepo](#) - present tense - continually) **the Father** ([pater](#)) **doing** ([poieo](#) - present tense - continually) - Don't miss that Jesus again calls God His **Father** and Himself God's **Son** clearly claiming equality with God! How does Jesus "**see**" the Father doing these things? The most logical way is that they are on the same "wavelength" (so to speak) and in such perfect unity, that the will of the Son is in perfect harmony with the will of His Father (cf Jn 4:34+). We also do well to know that He frequently took time out to pray to His Father (Mk 1:35+, Mk 6:46+, Mt 14:23+, Lk 6:12+) Jesus was filled with the Spirit (Lk 4:1+, cf Acts 10:38+), completely controlled by the Spirit and is One with the Father. Because of His being one with the Father, He can do absolutely **nothing** apart from Him. It is this perfect oneness which allows Jesus to "**see**" what the Father is doing. This reminds me of the [doctrine of the Trinity](#) which is difficult for finite human minds to explain and/or understand, but a doctrine which is a foundational truth describing the perfect relationship between the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. **F B Meyer** describes this trinitarian oneness as "the inner and immediate intuition which the Son perpetually has of the Father's work."

*Perfect Sonship involves perfect identity of will and action with the Father*

-- Westcott

**Whitacre** on how Jesus **sees** what **the Father is doing** - When Jesus says the Son **sees** what His Father is doing He is not saying that He makes rational deductions regarding God's activity from what He can observe in Scripture or history or nature. Rather, since Jesus is in the "bosom of the Father" (Jn 1:18+), totally at one with the Father (Jn 10:30+), He sees God differently than anyone else ever has (Jn 1:18+; Jn 6:46+). While he is referring to His human experience, as the next verse makes clear, He has a sensitivity beyond human experience to God's voice, because His intimacy with God is unclouded by sin. **This sight, then, refers to His constant communion with his Father**, and thus the actions He refers to are not some special signs done now and then to illustrate what the Father is like. Rather, **Jesus' whole life, everything He does, is reflective of what He sees the Father doing** ([Jesus Delivers His Keynote Address: The Revelation of the Father's Son Jn 5:19-30](#)) (Bolding added)

**THOUGHT** (Whitacre) - "Jesus Himself, Who is the unique Son and Who alone has seen God, is nevertheless the model of true humanity in that He is thoroughly open to God, humble, doing nothing of His own. The birth from above makes us God's children, and we share in something of the same sort of relationship with God through the Spirit as we see in the Son." Beloved, you may want to read that statement again because IT CHANGES EVERYTHING! By that I mean it totally transforms the way we "**do**" ministry. To say it another way, we need to "**be**" before we "**do**." And so, following Jesus' example, we are to continually seek to **BE** in such harmony (realizing of course we as sinful beings cannot be in perfect harmony) with the Father through His Spirit (and His Word and prayer), that what we **DO** is an overflow of our "**BE**" (so to speak - "being" is better English). This is the "secret" of a productive, exciting, abundant Christian life and ministry which brings great glory to our Father (Mt 5:16+), yields abundant harvest of good fruit (Jn 15:5+, cf Jn 15:8+) and stores up a rich reward we will enjoy throughout eternity (Mt 6:19-20+). If you are intrigued, let me encourage you to read the more detailed description of [Walking Like Jesus Walked!](#) And "fasten your (spiritual) seatbelt!"

**For** ([gar](#)) - term of explanation) - Jesus will now explain His relationship to His Father will 4 successive terms of explanation ([gar](#)) in Jn 5:19, 20, 21, 22).

**Osborne** on **for** ([gar](#))- The first ("for" Jn 5:19b) explains that sonship demands unity of action: "Whatever the Father does, the Son also does." The emphasis here is on the unity of the Father and the Son in terms of action. "Whatever the Father does, the Son also does." The emphasis here is on the unity of the Father and the Son in terms of action. As Westcott says (1881:85), "His action is not only coincident but coextensive with the action of the Father... not in imitation, but in virtue of His sameness of nature." He is at the same time one with the Father and dependent on the Father. (See [The Gospel of John](#) - scroll up and down for more text)

**Whatever the Father** ([pater](#)) **does** ([poieo](#) - present tense - continually), **these things the Son also does** ([poieo](#) - present tense - continually) **in like manner** ([homoios](#)) - **For** explains what Jesus means by the fact that He only does what He **sees** His Father doing. The following passages will explain "**these things**" that the Son does. One can only imagine the effect this claim had on the

hostile Jewish leaders! **In like manner** means the doing by both Father and Son is identical.

**R C H Lenski** - Jesus asserts not only that He as the Son does what the Father does, all that and only that, but also that all He thus does, He does as if the Father Himself does it, for it is all and in every way the Father's will and work. (Borrow [The interpretation of St. John's gospel](#))

**NET NOTE** - What works does the *Son* do *likewise*? The same that the Father does—and the same that the rabbis recognized as legitimate works of God on the Sabbath (see note on *working* in v. 17). (1) Jesus grants life (just as the Father grants life) on the Sabbath. But as the Father gives physical life on the Sabbath, so the Son grants spiritual life (John 5:21; note the “greater things” mentioned in v. 20). (2) Jesus judges (determines the destiny of people) on the Sabbath, just as the Father judges those who die on the Sabbath because the Father has granted authority to the Son to judge (John 5:22-23). But this is not all. Not only has this power been granted to Jesus in the present; it will be his in the future as well. In v. 28 there is a reference not to spiritually dead (only) but also physically dead. At their resurrection they respond to the Son as well.

**Spurgeon's Exposition** - Christ's work runs parallel with that of the Father. The Father and the Son ever work in perfect harmony with one another.

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**Amen** (281) **amen** is a transliteration from the Hebrew word **aman** which in turn is from the Hebrew verb **aman** = to be firm, to believe, this word conveying the idea of certainty) **Amen** is transliterated into Latin and English and many other languages, so that it is practically a universal word. In fact **amen** has been called the best-known word in human speech. To say “**Amen**” confirms a statement by someone else. **Renn** notes that **Amen** "indicates the solemn affirmation of the divine will and purpose in about one-third of the nearly 150 occurrences of the term. The remaining uses of the term yield the adverbial meaning “**truly**.” (Expository Dictionary of Bible Words) Surely acknowledges that which is valid and binding. The OT often used “amen” at the end of a sentence (truly, surely, certainly) to confirm the preceding words and invokes their fulfillment. Only the Lord Jesus uses amen (truly) at beginning of a sentence. His “Amen” guarantees the truth of His saying and affirms His authority.

Note amen occurs after the doxologies which end each of first four books of the Psalms - Ps 41:13; Ps 72:19; Ps 89:52; Ps 106:48 end with an “amen”. Adam Clarke writes that “in prayer (amen) signifies let it be so, make it steady, let it be ratified.” **Zodhiates** says “In the OT used often at the end of a sentence as an adverb meaning truly, surely, certainly. It thus confirms the preceding words and invokes their fulfillment: “so be it,” **Amen** is often at the end of a sentence as an adverb and conveys the sense of truly, surely, certainly, essentially serving as a confirmation to the veracity of the preceding words and also calling for their fulfillment (the idea is “so be it”) .

**Father** (3962) **pater** is the genitor (a begetter), by whom another is begotten. Stated more simply this is a man who has begotten a child. Father is the progenitor, the ancestor in the direct line (a forefather -- thus Adam was the “progenitor” of the Human Race). Father is one who imparts life and is committed to it; **Vine** writes that **pater** is “from a root signifying “a nourisher, protector, upholder” (Note: Not all lexicons agree with this origin) **Father** is used of our heavenly Father. He imparts life, from physical birth to the gift of eternal life through the second birth (regeneration, being born again). Through ongoing sanctification, the believer more and more resembles their heavenly Father.

Vine on Father when used “of God in relation to those who have been born anew (John 1:12, 13), and so are believers, Eph. 2:18; 4:6 (cf. 2 Cor. 6:18), and imitators of their “Father,” Matt. 5:45, 48; 6:1, 4, 6, 8, 9, etc. Christ never associated Himself with them by using the personal pronoun “our”; He always used the singular, “My Father,” His relationship being unoriginated and essential, whereas theirs is by grace and regeneration, e.g., Matt. 11:27; 25:34; John 20:17; Rev. 2:27; 3:5, 21; so the apostles spoke of God as the “Father” of the Lord Jesus Christ, e.g., Rom. 15:6; 2 Cor. 1:3; 11:31; Eph. 1:3; Heb. 1:5; 1 Pet. 1:3; Rev. 1:6; of God, as the “Father” of lights, i.e., the Source or Giver of whatsoever provides illumination, physical and spiritual, Jas. 1:17; of mercies, 2 Cor. 1:3; of glory, Eph. 1:17; as Creator, Heb. 12:9 (cf. Zech. 12:1).

God the Father (15x in NAS, Not once in the OT): 1 Cor 8:6; Gal 1:1; Eph 6:23; Phil 2:11; Col 1:3; 3:17; 1Th 1:1; 2Th 1:2; 1Ti 1:2; 2Ti 1:2; Titus 1:4; 1Pet 1:2; 2Pet 1:17; 2 John 1:3; Jude 1:1

God and Father (14x NAS, Not once in the OT): Rom 15:6; 1 Cor 15:24; 2 Cor 1:3; 11:31; Gal 1:4; Eph 1:3; 4:6; Phil 4:20; 1Th 1:3; 3:11, 13; Jas 1:27; 1Pet 1:3; Rev 1:6

**For** (1063)(**gar**) is a subordinating conjunction expressing cause or explanation and thus introduces an explanation. **GAR** is “a causative particle standing always after one or more words in a clause and expressing the reason for what has been before, affirmed or implied. For, in the sense of because, and so forth.” (Borrow [The Complete Word Study Dictionary: New Testament - Page 357](#) and [Page 358](#) - see the preceding pages for **Zodhiates'** lengthy description of **gar**)

**THOUGHT** - In simple terms **for** is a [term of explanation](#) and its occurrence should always prompt one to

pause and ponder the text and context, always asking at least one 5W/H question "What is the text explaining?" which will force you to examine the preceding passages, which in turn will hone or refine your skill of observation and help you establish the context, which will lead to a more accurate interpretation, which is essential for valid application of the text.

While not every "for" in the Bible is a [term of explanation](#), most are and since there are over 7500 uses of for (NAS), you will have ample opportunity to observe and interrogate the text. Two clues that the for is a term of explanation - (1) It is at the beginning of the sentence or clause or (2) you can substitute the word "because" and it makes good sense. As you practice this discipline of pausing to ponder, you are establishing the [context](#) (which leads to more accurate [interpretation](#) and thus more apropos [application](#)) and you are in effect engaging in the blessed activity of [Biblical Meditation](#) (See Ps 1:2+, Ps 1:3+ and Joshua 1:8+ for the blessed benefits of [meditation](#) = I like to call it a "mini-meditation").

**Gilbrant** - Gar is a very common postpositive (i.e., it never stands first in its clause) conjunction. There are over 1,000 occurrences in the New Testament. The meaning of a sentence, clause, or phrase often hinges upon such a word. "The turning point or direction of a thought is usually indicated by a conjunction" (Dana and Mantey, [A Manual Grammar of the Greek New Testament](#) -ONLINE p.240). **Classical Greek** Gar is found in all forms of Greek literature from the time of Homer (ca. Eighth–Sixth Century B.C.). Its usage is consistent throughout the classical and Hellenistic (Septuagint, New Testament, church fathers) literary periods. **New Testament Usage** The most frequent sense of the word is to signify a reason, cause, or ground of a (usually) preceding statement and is translated "for." Gar may be used alone (e.g., Romans 1:9) or with a number of other particles (e.g., kai gar, Mark 10:45; men gar, 2 Corinthians 9:1). The word can also indicate that an explanatory thought is about to be given, meaning "for instance," "now," or "for example" (e.g., Matthew 9:5; Luke 14:28). In addition, **gar** can mean "indeed," "certainly," "so," or "then" in the sense of introducing a thought of confirmation, assurance, or inference (e.g., Acts 8:31; Romans 15:27; Hebrews 12:3). Finally, the word can simply express a continuation of thought and thus be equivalent to *de*, meaning "and" (often in Paul's writings as in Romans 1:18 and Ro 2:25 and in Luke's as in Luke 1:15 and Acts 8:39).

Gar - found over 1000 times in the NT most often translated FOR (only uses in Matthew are listed here - for all the uses click [1063](#) and scroll down to the "Frequency List" - disregard the NAS which is not accurate) - Matt. 1:18; Matt. 1:20; Matt. 1:21; Matt. 2:2; Matt. 2:5; Matt. 2:6; Matt. 2:13; Matt. 2:20; Matt. 3:2; Matt. 3:3; Matt. 3:9; Matt. 3:15; Matt. 4:6; Matt. 4:10; Matt. 4:17; Matt. 4:18; Matt. 5:12; Matt. 5:18; Matt. 5:20; Matt. 5:29; Matt. 5:30; Matt. 5:46; Matt. 6:7; Matt. 6:8; Matt. 6:14; Matt. 6:16; Matt. 6:21; Matt. 6:24; Matt. 6:32; Matt. 6:34; Matt. 7:2; Matt. 7:8; Matt. 7:12; Matt. 7:25; Matt. 7:29; Matt. 8:9; Matt. 9:5; Matt. 9:13; Matt. 9:16; Matt. 9:21; Matt. 9:24; Matt. 10:10; Matt. 10:17; Matt. 10:19; Matt. 10:20; Matt. 10:23; Matt. 10:26; Matt. 10:35; Matt. 11:10; Matt. 11:13; Matt. 11:18; Matt. 11:30; Matt. 12:8; Matt. 12:33; Matt. 12:34; Matt. 12:37; Matt. 12:40; Matt. 12:50; Matt. 13:12; Matt. 13:15; Matt. 13:17; Matt. 14:3; Matt. 14:4; Matt. 14:24; Matt. 15:2; Matt. 15:4; Matt. 15:19; Matt. 15:27; Matt. 16:2; Matt. 16:3; Matt. 16:25; Matt. 16:26; Matt. 16:27; Matt. 17:15; Matt. 17:20; Matt. 18:7; Matt. 18:10; Matt. 18:11; Matt. 18:20; Matt. 19:12; Matt. 19:14; Matt. 19:22; Matt. 20:1; Matt. 20:16; Matt. 21:26; Matt. 21:32; Matt. 22:14; Matt. 22:16; Matt. 22:28; Matt. 22:30; Matt. 23:3; Matt. 23:4; Matt. 23:8; Matt. 23:9; Matt. 23:10; Matt. 23:13; Matt. 23:17; Matt. 23:19; Matt. 23:39; Matt. 24:5; Matt. 24:6; Matt. 24:7; Matt. 24:21; Matt. 24:24; Matt. 24:27; Matt. 24:28; Matt. 24:38; Matt. 25:14; Matt. 25:29; Matt. 25:35; Matt. 25:42; Matt. 26:9; Matt. 26:10; Matt. 26:11; Matt. 26:12; Matt. 26:28; Matt. 26:31; Matt. 26:43; Matt. 26:52; Matt. 26:73; Matt. 27:18; Matt. 27:19; Matt. 27:23; Matt. 27:43; Matt. 28:2; Matt. 28:5; Matt. 28:6

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## Just Like Dad

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. John 5:19

Today's Scripture & Insight: John 5:17–20

Isn't it endearing to see a child mimicking his parents? How often we've seen the young boy in a car seat, gripping his imaginary steering wheel intently while keeping a close eye on the driver to see what Daddy does next.

I remember doing the same thing when I was young. Nothing gave me greater pleasure than doing exactly what my dad did—and I'm sure he got an even bigger kick watching me copy his actions.

I would like to think God felt the same way when He saw His dearest Son doing exactly what the Father did—reaching out to the lost, helping the needy, and healing the sick. Jesus said, "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" (John 5:19).

We too are called to do the same—to "follow God's example, therefore, as dearly loved children and walk in the way of love" (Eph. 5:1–2). As we continue growing to be more like Jesus, may we seek to love like the Father loves, forgive like He forgives, care like He cares, and live in ways that please Him. It is a delight to copy His actions, in the power of the Spirit, knowing that our reward is the affectionate, tender smile of a loving Father. By: Leslie Koh ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Jesus, thank You for showing us the way to the Father. Help us to be more and more like You and the Father each day.

Our Daily Bread welcomes writer Leslie Koh! Meet Leslie and all our authors at [odb.org/all-authors](http://odb.org/all-authors).

The Father gave us the Spirit to make us like the Son.

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## Becoming Useful

The Son can do nothing of Himself. —John 5:19

Today's Scripture: John 5:19-23

Jesus was fully God, yet He was fully man. As a man, His power, wisdom, and grace flowed not from His divine nature but from His utter dependence on God. "The Son can do nothing of Himself," He said (John 5:19). How much did Jesus do apart from God? Nothing!

Jesus always depended on His Father. Luke reports that as news of Jesus' ministry spread, "Great multitudes came together to hear, and to be healed by Him of their infirmities. So He Himself often withdrew into the wilderness and prayed" (Luke 5:15-16). He knew He needed those quiet times to restore His soul.

**What's done in secret is what matters.**

**It's during those quiet times that we, like Jesus,  
are shaped and molded and made into people that God can put to His intended use.**

"But," you say, "I'm in a place where I can't be useful." Perhaps you feel that circumstances limit you drastically. Illness, financial problems, a difficult boss or co-worker, or an uncooperative family member seem to conspire against you. Whatever your situation, use it to grow closer to the Savior.

Learn to have utter dependence on the Father, just as Jesus did. Leave it up to God to make you useful in whatever way He sees fit.

By: David H. Roper ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

O that my life may useful be  
As I serve Jesus faithfully;  
And may the world see Christ in me—  
This is my earnest prayer.  
—Hess

The measure of your usefulness is the measure of your faithfulness.

**John 5:20 "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."**

BGT John 5:20 ὁ πατήρ φιλεῖ τὸν υἱὸν καὶ πάντα ὅσα ἐκείνου αὐτὸς ποιεῖ, καὶ μετὰ ταῦτα ὁ πατήρ ἕξει ἄλλα ἔργα, ἃ οὐ δύναται αὐτὸς ποιεῖν, ἀλλὰ ὁ υἱὸς ποιήσει, ἵνα ἡμεῖς θαυμάσωμεν.

KJV John 5:20 For the Father loveth the Son, and sheweth him all things that himself doeth: and he will shew him greater works than these, that ye may marvel.

NET John 5:20 For the Father loves the Son and shows him everything he does, and will show him greater deeds than these, so that you will be amazed.

CSB John 5:20 For the Father loves the Son and shows Him everything He is doing, and He will show Him greater works than these so that you will be amazed.

ESV John 5:20 For the Father loves the Son and shows him all that he himself is doing. And greater works than these will he show him, so that you may marvel.

NIV John 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.

NLT John 5:20 For the Father loves the Son and shows him everything he is doing. In fact, the Father will show him how to do even greater works than healing this man. Then you will truly be astonished.

NRS John 5:20 The Father loves the Son and shows him all that he himself is doing; and he will show him greater works than these, so that you will be astonished.



- **the Father:** Jn 3:35 17:26 Mt 3:17 17:5 2Pe 1:17
- **and shows:** Jn 1:18 10:32 15:15 Pr 8:22-31 Mt 11:27 Lu 10:22
- **greater:** Jn 5:21,25,29 12:45-47
- [John 5 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passages:

John 10:17 **“For this reason the Father loves Me**, because I lay down My life so that I may take it again.

John 15:9 Just as **the Father has loved Me**, I have also loved you; abide in My love.

John 17:23 I in them and You in Me, that they may be perfected in unity, so that the world may know that You sent Me, and loved them, **even as You have loved Me.**

John 17:26 and I have made Your name known to them, and will make it known, so that **the love with which You loved Me** may be in them, and I in them.”

Matthew 17:5 (While he was still speaking, a bright cloud overshadowed them, and behold, a voice out of the cloud said, **“This is My beloved Son**, with whom I am well-pleased; listen to Him!”

Mark 1:10-11 Immediately coming up out of the water, He saw the heavens opening, and the Spirit like a dove descending upon Him; 11 and a voice came out of the heavens: **“You are My beloved Son**, in You I am well-pleased.”

Ephesians 1:6 to the praise of the glory of His grace, which He freely bestowed on us **in the Beloved.**

## THE LOVE OF THE FATHER FOR HIS SON

**For** ([gar](#) - Term of explanation) - What is Jesus explaining (“for” - term of explanation)? He is explaining what is the underlying cause of the bond, unity, communion, cooperation and revelation (from Father to Son) Jesus has just described and how the Son can do whatever the Father does.

**Osborne** on the second **for** - The second **“for”** clause (Jn 5:20) states that this union of action is grounded in the love of the Father. As a result of that depth of love, God **“shows Him everything He is doing.”** In other words, the sharing between Father and Son is absolute, with nothing held back. In Jn 5:19, Jesus **“sees”** what the Father is doing, and here the flip side is stressed, with the Father **showing** everything He is doing. This reciprocal knowledge is based on reciprocal love. Here we see the basis of the omniscience Jesus had demonstrated several times (Jn 1:42, 47-48; 4:18). In fact, Jesus adds that the revelation from the Father will enable Him to do even “greater works” than the healing of the lame man. Probably this points to the next two verses, which describe how the Father will give the Son authority over life and judgment. The greatest miracle of all is the gift of eternal life (cf. Jn 14:12). (See [The Gospel of John](#) - scroll up and down for more text)

**Whitacre** adds that “the Son’s complete revelation of the Father (Jn 5:19) is grounded in the Father’s own love for the Son and the fact that the Father has not held anything back from the Son. The Father’s love is the heart of everything. It is this love between the Father and the Son “that moves the sun and the other stars” (Dante, *The Divine Comedy: Paradise* 33.145). God’s love for the world (Jn 3:16) leads him to send the Son so we may be able to share through the Spirit in the Father’s love for the Son (Jn 16:27; 17:23). This eternal relationship is the source of Jesus’ activity for it leads the Father to show the Son all he does. We see again in verse 20 that the Father takes the initiative; he is in control, and he is the source of all. This passage also emphasizes that the Father has held back nothing of his activity from the Son. All that God does is revealed to Jesus, and Jesus passes everything on to us (Jn 15:15). ([Jesus Delivers His Keynote Address: The Revelation of the Father’s Son Jn 5:19-30](#))

**The Father** ([pater](#)) **loves** ([phileo](#) - present tense - continually) **the Son and shows** ([deiknuo](#)) **Him all things** (without exception) **that He Himself is doing** - Notice Jesus gives two reasons for the bond between Father and Son - (1) the continual love of the **Father** for the **Son** and (2) the fact that the **Father** makes known ([deiknuo](#)) to Jesus **all things** (all without exception) that He is doing, holding nothing back. The communication between the Father and the Son is perfect in every way.

**A T Robertson** on **Father loves the Son** - In Jn 3:35 we have agapāi from [agapao](#), evidently one verb expressing as noble a love as the other. Sometimes a distinction (Jn 21:17) is made, but not here, unless [phileo](#) presents the notion of intimate friendship (philos - friend), fellowship, the affectionate side, while [agapao](#) (Latin diligo) is more the intelligent choice. But John uses both verbs for the mystery of love of the Father for the Son. ([Word Pictures of the New Testament](#))

**R C H Lenski** adds “Here Jesus uses φιλε v, the love of affection, whereas in Jn 3:35 he uses γαρ v, the love of full comprehension

and purpose. This does not imply that the former here denies the latter, which it does not do, but that the former harmonizes better with the relation of the two equal persons and their consequent affectionate intercourse." (Borrow [The interpretation of St. John's gospel](#))

**Charles Swindoll** - While **Father** and **Son** are distinct persons, **Father** and **Son** are equal and unified. As such, the **Father** and the **Son** cannot act in opposition to One Another. The **Son** is the perfect revelation of the **Father** here on earth in human form. Everything He does reflects the intentions and actions of the **Father**. Moreover, what the **Father** knows, the **Son** knows, because They are one being; therefore, they share the same mind. (Borrow [Swindoll's Insights on John](#))

## GREATER WORKS WOULD FOLLOW

**And the Father** ([pater](#)) **will show** ([deiknuo](#)) **Him greater works** ([ergon](#)) **than these** - Note the pattern is the **Father** shows the **Son** (again emphasizing their oneness) and the **Son** shows the **Jews** by doing the **Father's** work before their very eyes! Some say "*seeing is believing*," but sadly for most the **Jews**, especially the .leaders their seeing **Jesus' works** did not lead to believing in Him!

**THOUGHT**- Don't say if I saw His miracles today I would believe! That is doubtful. You have something far better than His miracles. You have access to His Word in John's Gospel and that is what you must believe. Miracles by **Jesus** won't save anyone, but believing the words of **Jesus** will!

To what **works** does the pronoun **these** refer? Since **these** describes more than one "work," **Jesus** was not just referring to the healing of the paralyzed man in John 5. John has recorded two other "works" -- (1) turning water into wine in Cana (Jn 2:1-11) and (2) healing the official's son in Capernaum (Jn 4:46-54). **Jesus' point** is that the **works** He has already done (including healing the lame man on the Sabbath) were not done "of Himself" (Jn 5:19), but were things He saw His **Father** doing and thus they were works **Jesus** had done in union with His **Father** (Jn 5:19).

What would **greater works** refer to in the immediate context? In Jn 5:20 **Jesus gives life to those He wishes**, which would include eternal life, surely the greatest of all works.

**Vine** on **greater works** - He describes as **greater works** (i.e., than those of healing the sick). This is dealt with in the first part of the discourse (Jn 5:21-29), first as to spiritual resurrection (Jn 5:21-27), then as to the physical (Jn 5:28, 29).

**Michaels** on **greater works** - Two later miracles explicitly qualify as "**greater**," the gift of sight to a man born blind (see Jn 9:32), and the raising of a man four days dead (Jn 11:39). (Borrow [The Gospel of John](#))

**Lenski** on **greater works** - "**Will show**" implies that when the time comes, the **Father** will execute these works through **Jesus**, His **Son**. These **greater works** are the raising of the spiritually dead, the final raising of the bodily dead, and the last judgment. They are "greater" because they are fuller and loftier manifestations of the same power that displayed itself in the incidental miracles. (Borrow [The Interpretation of St. John's Gospel](#))

## PURPOSE OF GREATER WORKS

**So that** ([hina](#) - term of purpose [of greater works]) **you will marvel** ([thaumazo](#) in present tense) - The purpose of the **greater works** is that **You** **Jews** who sought to kill **Jesus** would be astonished and even dismayed! And if we let the context interpret the text, Jn 5:21, describes the greater work of resurrecting the dead and giving them life.

**Vincent** on **you will marvel** - The **you** is emphatic (με σ) and is addressed to those who questioned His authority, whose wonder would therefore be that of astonishment rather than of admiring faith, but might lead to faith. ([John 5 Commentary](#))

**Lenski** on **marvel** - In the case of the **Jews** and in the case of all unbelievers it will be empty marveling alone. They will not know what to make of these works, they will be astonished and finally overwhelmed by their progress and their power. (Borrow [The Interpretation of St. John's Gospel](#))

**Osborne** on the purpose of the **greater works** "is so they can "truly be astonished," noting the many times the people marvel at the knowledge and power of God in **Jesus** (Jn 3:7; 4:27; 5:28; 7:15, 21). The surprise and wonder they feel are a step toward faith and are part of encountering God in **Jesus**. (See [The Gospel of John](#) - scroll up and down for more text)

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**Will show** (1166) **deiknuo** means to show and has the sense of (1) to draw attention to, to point out, to show, to make known, to exhibit something (by visual, auditory, gestural, or linguistic means) so that it can be apprehended by the senses, to cause to see

(Mt 4:8, Lk 4:5, Mt 8:4) or (2) to show so as to prove something is true or to make clear by evidence or reasoning. **Show** in the sense of demonstrate or prove (as in Jas 3:13). To exhibit or present to the view of others. To explain the meaning or significance of something by demonstration.

**Deiknuo** in John's Gospel - Jn. 2:18; Jn. 5:20; Jn. 10:32; Jn. 14:8; Jn. 14:9; Jn. 20:20

**Marvel**(2296) **thaumazo** from **thauma** [from thaomai = to wonder] = wonder, admiration) means to wonder, marvel, be struck with admiration or astonishment, be surprised by the unexpected (Gal 1:6), denoting incredulous surprise. **Thaumazo** describes the human response when confronted by divine revelation in some form (Mt 9.33). Thaumazo was a rhetorical device used in law courts and politics to attack things done by the opposition party. **TDNT** on Classic Greek uses - The group has first the sense of astonishment, whether critical or inquisitive, then admiration, with a nuance of awe or fear at what is unusual or mysterious, e.g., miracles or oracles in religion, also magical acts or media, and certain phenomena (prior to their explanation) in philosophy.

**Thaumazo** in John's Gospel - Jn. 3:7; Jn. 4:27; Jn. 5:20; Jn. 5:28; Jn. 7:15; Jn. 7:21

**John 5:21 "For just as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, even so the Son also gives life to whom He wishes.**

BGT John 5:21 σπερ γ ρ πατ ρ γε ρει το ς νεκρο ς κα ζ ο ποιε , ο τω ς κα υ ς ο ς θ λει ζ ο ποιε .

KJV John 5:21 For as the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth them; even so the Son quickeneth whom he will.

NET John 5:21 For just as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, so also the Son gives life to whomever he wishes.

CSB John 5:21 And just as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, so the Son also gives life to anyone He wants to.

ESV John 5:21 For as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, so also the Son gives life to whom he will.

NIV John 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.

NLT John 5:21 For just as the Father gives life to those he raises from the dead, so the Son gives life to anyone he wants.

NRS John 5:21 Indeed, just as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, so also the Son gives life to whomever he wishes.

NJB John 5:21 Thus, as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, so the Son gives life to anyone he chooses;

NAB John 5:21 For just as the Father raises the dead and gives life, so also does the Son give life to whomever he wishes.

YLT John 5:21 'For, as the Father doth raise the dead, and doth make alive, so also the Son doth make alive whom he willeth;

- **just as the Father:** De 32:39 1Ki 17:21 2Ki 4:32-35 2Ki 5:7 Ac 26:8 Ro 4:17-19
- **even so:** Jn 11:25,43,44 17:2 Lu 7:14,15 8:54,55
- [John 5 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passages:

Deuteronomy 32:39+ (**GOD GIVES LIFE - JESUS IS CLAIMING TO BE GOD**) 'See now that I, I am He, And there is no god besides Me; **It is I who put to death and give life.** I have wounded and it is I who heal, And there is no one who can deliver from My hand.

1 Samuel 2:6+ (**GOD GIVES LIFE - JESUS IS CLAIMING TO BE GOD**) "The LORD kills and makes alive; He brings down to Sheol and raises up.

2 Kings 5:7 (**A KING OF ISRAEL ASKED NAAMAN**) When the king of Israel read the letter, he tore his clothes and said, "**Am I God, to kill and to make alive,** that this man is sending word to me to cure a man of

his leprosy? But consider now, and see how he is seeking a quarrel against me.”

John 11:25; 43; 44+ Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in Me will live even if he dies....43 When He had said these things, He cried out with a loud voice, “Lazarus, come forth.” 44 The man who had died came forth, bound hand and foot with wrappings, and his face was wrapped around with a cloth. Jesus \*said to them, “Unbind him, and let him go.”

John 17:1-2+ Jesus spoke these things; and lifting up His eyes to heaven, He said, “Father, the hour has come; glorify Your Son, that the Son may glorify You, 2 even as You gave Him authority over all flesh, **that to all whom You have given Him, He may give eternal life.**

## JESUS' POWER TO GIVE LIFE

**For** ([gar](#) - Term of explanation) - What is Jesus explaining? Check the context. What has Jesus just declared? He has just described **greater works** and now describes the greatest work, giving of life! Only God can give life to a dead body.

**Osborne** on this **for** - The other two **gar** (**for**) clauses that explain the unity of Father and Son provide two illustrations of the “work” they share (Jn 5:21-23)—namely, authority to give life and to judge. As stated above, the Father “**shows**” all things, and the Son “**sees**” them and then “**does**” them. Here the Father “**gives life**” via resurrection, and the Son “**gives life to anyone he wants.**” The raising of the dead was considered the special provenance of God (1 Sam 2:6; 2 Kgs 5:7), and later Judaism believed this power would not even be given to the Messiah (b. Ta’anit; The Eighteen Benedictions; cf. Köstenberger 2004:187). Elijah is the sole exception (1 Kgs 17:17-24) but only because God chose him to be such. Jesus transcends Elijah because He shares the divine power of life and gives it to “**anyone he wants,**” a reference to divine sovereignty over life. This gift is both spiritual life now and final resurrection. (See [The Gospel of John](#) - scroll up and down for more text)

**Just as the Father raises** ([egeiro](#) in present tense) **the dead** ([nekros](#)) **and gives them life** ([zoopoieo](#)), **even so the Son also gives life** ([zoopoieo](#)) **to whom He wishes** ([thelo](#)) (ESV - “to whom He will”) - Note the phrases **just as** and **even so** again emphasize the perfect unity between **Father** and **Son**. The **Son** “sees” what the **Father** does and does the same works! **Raises the dead** is not repeated again in the description of the work of Jesus but is implied by the repeat phrase **gives life**. Note the phrase **to whom He wishes** speaks of the authority of the Son. There is also an implication that not all will receive **life** but only those the Son **wishes**.

**Gives life** ([zoopoieo](#)) in this context is not just physical **life** but is also (and more importantly) Jesus gives spiritual **life**. The reason they were **dead** is because the wages of sin is death (Ro 6:23). The reason they have **life** is because it is the gift of the **Father** and the **Son** to the one that believes on Him. **To whom He wishes** (or wills) reflects the Father's will because the will of the Son is identical to the will of the Father (Jn 5:30). Note also that the phrase **to whom He wishes** was exemplified by Jesus choosing to physically heal one man out of a crowd of sick, disabled people, so that this description would also be an allusion to the [elect of God](#) (not a popular subject to discuss!).

**A T Robertson** on **gives life** ([zoopoieo](#)) **to whom He wishes** ([thelo](#)) - As yet, so far as we know, Jesus had not raised the dead, but he claims the power to do it on a par with the power of the Father. The raising of the son of the widow of Nain (Luke 7:11-17+) is not far ahead, followed by the message to the Baptist which speaks of this same power (Luke 7:22+; Matthew 11:5+), and the raising of Jairus' daughter (Matthew 9:18, 22-26+). Jesus exercises this power on those “whom he wills.” Christ has power to quicken both body and soul. ([Word Pictures of the New Testament](#))

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**Raises** (1453) [egeiro](#) was used literally to refer to arousing or awaking someone from sleep (Mt 8:25). **Egeiro** was used literally also to raise up or lift up a person either sitting or lying down. Figuratively **egeiro** was used to “raise up” a person from illness, thus restoring them to health. Figuratively as used here in Romans 4:24, **egeiro** is used to describe the bringing back of Jesus from the dead and thus raising Him or causing Him to rise. The idea of wake up from death conveyed by **egeiro** because sleep was used as metaphor of death for believers (there is however no “soul sleep”). Figuratively to rouse to a state of watchfulness or readiness (Eph 5:14).

**Egeiro in John's Gospel** - Jn. 2:19; Jn. 2:20; Jn. 2:22; Jn. 5:8; Jn. 5:21; Jn. 7:52; Jn. 11:29; Jn. 12:1; Jn. 12:9; Jn. 12:17; Jn. 13:4; Jn. 14:31; Jn. 21:14;

**Dead** (3498) ([nekros](#)) means dead as one who has breathed his last. A dead person, dead body, corpse (Mt 23:27 Rev 20:13 Dt 28:26 Jer 7:33) Frequently used of the spiritual condition of unsaved men (Mt 8:22 Jn 5:25 Ep 2:1,5 5:14 Php 3:11 Col 2:13 Lu 15:24) Spiritual condition of believers in regard to sin (Ro 6:11).

**Nekros in John's Gospel** - Jn. 2:22; Jn. 5:21; Jn. 5:25; Jn. 12:1; Jn. 12:9; Jn. 12:17; Jn. 20:9; Jn. 21:14;

**Gives life** (2227) [zoopoieo](#) from **zoos** = alive + **poieo** = to make) means to revitalize, make alive, give life, quicken, vivify, reanimate, restore to life. Most of the NT uses refer to God's ability to give life to men, either by resurrecting them from physical death or by regenerating them from spiritual death. In 1Co 15:36 Paul uses zoopoieo figuratively to picture the sprouting of a seed in his defense of the doctrine of the resurrection.

**Zoopoieo - 11x in 10v - come to life(1), give life(1), gives...life(1), gives life(4), impart life(1), life-giving(1), made alive(2).** Jn. 5:21; Jn. 6:63; Rom. 4:17; Rom. 8:11; 1 Co. 15:22; 1 Co. 15:36; 1 Co. 15:45; 2 Co. 3:6; Gal. 3:21; 1 Pet. 3:18

### John 5:22 "For not even the Father judges anyone, but He has given all judgment to the Son,

BGT John 5:22 ο δ γ ρ πατ ρ κρ νει ο δ να, λλ τ ν κρ σιν π σαν δ δωκεν τ υ ,

KJV John 5:22 For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son:

NET John 5:22 Furthermore, the Father does not judge anyone, but has assigned all judgment to the Son,

CSB John 5:22 The Father, in fact, judges no one but has given all judgment to the Son,

ESV John 5:22 The Father judges no one, but has given all judgment to the Son,

NIV John 5:22 Moreover, the Father judges no one, but has entrusted all judgment to the Son,

NLT John 5:22 In addition, the Father judges no one. Instead, he has given the Son absolute authority to judge,

NRS John 5:22 The Father judges no one but has given all judgment to the Son,

NJB John 5:22 for the Father judges no one; he has entrusted all judgement to the Son,

NAB John 5:22 Nor does the Father judge anyone, but he has given all judgment to his Son,

YLT John 5:22 for neither doth the Father judge any one, but all the judgment He hath given to the Son,

- Jn 5:27 Jn 3:35 Jn 17:2 Ps 9:7,8 50:3-6 96:13 98:9 Ec 11:9 12:14 Mt 11:27 Mt 16:27 25:31-46 28:18 Ac 10:42 17:31 Ro 2:16 Ro 14:10-12 2Co 5:10 2Th 1:7-10 2Ti 4:1 1Pe 4:5 Rev 20:11-12
- [John 5 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

### Related Passages:

John 5:27+ and He gave Him authority to execute judgment (BOTH AT THE BEMA, THE GREAT WHITE THRONE), because He is the Son of Man.

John 3:35+ "The Father loves the Son and has given all things (INCLUDING JUDGMENT) into His hand.

Acts 10:42+ "And He ordered us to preach to the people, and solemnly to testify that this is the One who has been appointed by God as **Judge of the living and the dead**.

Acts 17:31+ because He has fixed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness **through a Man whom He has appointed**, having furnished proof to all men by raising Him from the dead."

Romans 2:16+ on the day when, according to my gospel, God will judge the secrets of men **through Christ Jesus**.

2 Timothy 4:1+ I solemnly charge you in the presence of God and of **Christ Jesus, Who is to judge the living and the dead**, and by His appearing and His kingdom:

2 Corinthians 5:10+ (BEMA SEAT - ONLY BELIEVERS STAND HERE; SIN HAS BEEN JUDGED; THIS IS FOR REWARDS) For we must all appear before **the judgment seat (bema) of Christ**, so that (TERM OF PURPOSE) each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad (NOT SIN, JUST NOT ABIDING IN VINE - Jn 15:5).

**JESUS THE JUDGE  
OF ALL MANKIND**



**For** ([gar](#) - Term of explanation) - What is Jesus explaining? What has Jesus just stated is under the authority of the Son? To give life to whom He wishes. Jesus now explains how that life will be given. As explained above this is the fourth term of explanation in which Jesus justifies His right to declare equality with God back in John 5:17.

**Osborne** on this last **for** ([gar](#)) - The final [gar](#) clause in Jn 5:22 ("In addition," nlt) goes beyond the idea of Jn 5:21, that Jesus has God's power in giving life. Here, Jesus makes the surprising statement, "**The Father judges no one**" but instead "**has given the Son absolute authority to judge.**" Throughout the Old Testament and in Judaism, Yahweh Alone is the final Judge. Jesus is saying that the power of life and judgment has now been passed to Him, the Son (cf. the note on Jn 3:17 regarding the possible contradiction with that verse)..(The Father) has shared that authority with Jesus, Who became the earthly Judge of all in His ministry and who will share in the final judgment. The purpose of this is that the Son may have the same "honor" (timaō) as the Father. While the Son is dependent on the Father (Jn 5:19-20), He is also equal to the Father in authority over life and judgment (Jn 5:21-22); they have equal honor and glory. **To honor the Father is to honor the Son; to refuse the Son is to refuse the Father.**This becomes a major facet of Jesus' teaching in John: **one cannot believe or honor God without believing in and honoring Jesus** (Jn 5:38, 43-44; 7:16-17; 8:19, 28, 42, 47; 10:38; 14:1), and the Son is the only path to God (Jn 14:6). As Carson brings out (1991:255), there is a salvation-historical progression here. Abraham, Moses, and David honored God with their lives, but now the final stage in the history of redemption has arrived. To try to honor God while rejecting his Son (as many Jews did at that time) is now a logical impossibility. The Messiah has come; He is the focus of the divine plan, the only One worthy of worship. (See [The Gospel of John](#) - scroll up and down for more text) (Bolding added)

**Not** (absolutely not) **even the Father judges** ([krino](#)) **anyone, but** (clear term of contrast) **He has given** (assigned, entrusted, handed over) **all judgment to the Son** - Notice that although the Father does not judge, He is still the One Who has authority but He **has given** (perfect tense signifies He has given in past and this endures forever) it to His Son.

What is the **judgment** for? In context of Jn 5:21 it is to determine who receives (eternal) life and who does not receive (eternal) life from the **Son**.

**All judgment** is all inclusive (all without exception), so every judgment, whether it is the judgment of believers (Bema seat), the so-called [judgment of the sheep and the goats](#) (Mt 25:31-46) or the judgment of non-believers ([Great White Throne Judgment](#) - Rev 20:11-15+) is now and in the future under the authority of the Son. Paul reiterates this truth in his closing charge to Timothy declaring "I solemnly charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, **Who is to judge the living (BELIEVERS) and the dead (NON-BELIEVERS** - Eph 2:1+), and by His appearing and His kingdom." (2Ti 4:1+, cf 1Pe 4:5+) ([See the other passages above](#) that teach all judgment will be through the Son of God).

#### **Related Resources: All from gotquestions.org**

- [What are all the different judgments in the Bible?](#)
- [What does it mean that judgment begins at the house of God?](#)
- [What is the Judgment Seat of Christ / Bema Seat of Christ?](#)
- [What happens at the final judgment?](#)
- [What does the Bible say about when God will judge us?](#)

**John 5:23 so that all will honor the Son even as they honor the Father. He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent Him.**

BGT John 5:23 να πνετες τιμ σι τν υν καθς τιμ σι τν πατ ρα. μ τιμ ν τν υν ο τιμ τν πατ ρα τν π μψαντα α τν.

KJV John 5:23 That all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father. He that honoureth not the Son honoureth not the Father which hath sent him.

NET John 5:23 so that all people will honor the Son just as they honor the Father. The one who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent him.

CSB John 5:23 so that all people will honor the Son just as they honor the Father. Anyone who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent Him.

ESV John 5:23 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.

NIV John 5:23 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.

NLT John 5:23 so that everyone will honor the Son, just as they honor the Father. Anyone who does not honor the Son is certainly not honoring the Father who sent him.

NRS John 5:23 so that all may honor the Son just as they honor the Father. Anyone who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent him.

NJB John 5:23 so that all may honour the Son as they honour the Father. Whoever refuses honour to the Son refuses honour to the Father who sent him.

NAB John 5:23 so 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.

YLT John 5:23 that all may honour the Son according as they honour the Father; he who is not honouring the Son, doth not honour the Father who sent him.

- **all men:** Jn 14:1 Ps 146:3-5 Jer 17:5-7 Mt 12:21 Ro 15:12 2Co 1:9 Eph 1:12,13 2Ti 1:12 \*marg: Ps 2:12 Isa 42:8 43:10 44:6 Mt 28:19 Ro 1:7 1Co 1:3 2Co 13:14 1Th 3:11-13 2Th 2:16,17 Heb 1:6 2Pe 3:18 Rev 5:8-14 Mt 10:37 22:37,38 1Co 16:22 Eph 6:24 Lu 12:8,9 Ro 6:22 14:7-9 1Co 6:19 10:31 2Co 5:14,19 Tit 2:14 Isa 43:11 45:15,21 Zec 9:9 Tit 2:13 3:4-6 2Pe 1:1
- **He that:** Jn 15:23,24 16:14 17:10 Mt 11:27 Ro 8:9 1Jn 2:23 2Jn 1:9
- [John 5 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passages:

John 15:23 "He who hates Me hates My Father also.

1 John 2:22 Who is the liar but the one who denies that Jesus is the Christ? This is the antichrist, the one who denies the Father and the Son.

1 John 2:23 Whoever denies the Son does not have the Father; the one who confesses the Son has the Father also.

Luke 10:16 "The one who listens to you listens to Me, and the one who rejects you rejects Me; and he who rejects Me rejects the One who sent Me."

### HONOR THE SON! DO IT TODAY!

**So that** ([hina](#)) is a term of purpose or result. This verse gives the purpose for the Father giving all judgment to the Son (Jn 5:22). As an aside, did you see the keyword in this verse? **Honor**.

**All will honor** ([timao](#) - present tense) **the Son even as they honor** ([timao](#) - present tense) **the Father** ([pater](#)) - Here is the purpose of giving all judgment to the Son. It is that **all** people (both believers and unbelievers) will honor the Son. This verse shows the unity of the Father and the Son.

Notice that **will honor** is a prophecy that Paul explains will be fulfilled in the future writing "

For this reason (WHAT REASON? SEE Php 2:8) also, God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the Name which is above every name, so that ([hina](#) - term of purpose or result) at the Name of Jesus EVERY KNEE (BELIEVERS AND NON-BELIEVERS!) 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." (Philippians 2:9-11+)

#### ***Willingly or unwillingly all will honor the Son!***

**THOUGHT** - Dear reader, have you honored the Son by believing in the Son? If you have you, you have honored His Father and you will willingly bow to Him and confess Him as Lord, now and forever. Amen. Acts 16:31+ says "**Believe** in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved."

**He who does not honor** ([timao](#) - present tense) **the Son does not honor** ([timao](#) - present tense) **the Father Who sent Him** - To dishonor (or reject) the **Son** is to dishonor (or reject) the **Father**! Thus Jesus turned the tables on the Jews because to refuse to honor Him (the Son) while claiming to honor God the Father was self-deception and what one might even say is a form of blasphemy (the very thing the Jews accused Jesus of!). Jesus affirmed that the only way anyone can **honor** the **Father** is by

honoring the **Son!** You might ask, how can one **honor the Son** today? Jesus will explain that in the next verse.

**THOUGHT-** To **honor** is to manifest an attitude of love, respect, and disposition of one's heart which in the context of the child/parent relationship yields the fruit of obedience. Would your thoughts, words and actions this past week show that you **honor the Son** and the Father?

Jesus makes an astounding claim, **D. A. Carson** explaining that "In a theistic universe, such a statement belongs to one who is Himself to be addressed as **God** (cf. Jn 20:28), or to stark **insanity**. The one who utters such things is to be dismissed with pity or scorn, or worshipped as Lord. If with much current scholarship we retreat to seeing in such material less the claims of the Son than the beliefs and witness of the Evangelist and his church, the same options confront us. 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. (Borrow [The Gospel according to John](#) 255). (Bolding added)

**Mattoon** - If you don't honor the Son, you don't honor the Father. Those who claim to worship God, yet deny Jesus Christ, have neither the Son nor the Father. ([Treasures from John.](#))

**A T Robertson on does not honor the Son-** Dishonouring Jesus is dishonouring the Father who sent him (John 8:49; John 12:26; John 15:23; 1 John 2:23). See also Luke 10:16. There is small comfort here for those who praise Jesus as teacher and yet deny his claims to worship. The Gospel of John carries this high place for Christ throughout, but so do the other Gospels (even Q, the Logia of Jesus) and the rest of the New Testament. ([Word Pictures of the New Testament](#))

**J C Ryle** - "They who profess zeal for the one God do not honour Him aright, unless they honour the Son as they honour the Father." ([John 5 Commentary](#))

[Complete Biblical Library](#) On a human level if an ambassador of a king is dishonored, the king is dishonored also. But, Jesus is equal with the Father; an ambassador is not equal with a king. Our Lord's authority to give life proves His almighty power as deity. His authority to judge establishes His divine attribute of omniscience. The possession of omnipotence and omniscience attest to His deity.

**MacArthur** adds that "This verse goes far beyond making Jesus a mere ambassador who is acting in the name of a monarch, but gives Him full and complete equality with the Father (cf. Php 2:9-11)." (Borrow [The MacArthur Study Bible](#))

*Many people claim to worship God, but deny that Jesus Christ is God.*

[William MacDonald](#) makes an excellent point on this passage - This is a most important statement, and one of the clearest proofs in the Bible of the deity of the Lord Jesus Christ. Throughout the Bible we are taught that God alone is to be worshiped. In the Ten Commandments, the people were forbidden to have any god but the one true God. Now we are taught that all should honor the Son just as they honor the Father. The only conclusion we can come to from this verse is that Jesus Christ is God. Many people claim to worship God, but deny that Jesus Christ is God. They say that He was a good man or more godlike than any other man who ever lived. But this verse puts Him on an absolute equality with God, and requires that men should give Him the same **honor** which they give to God the Father. If a person does not **honor the Son**, then he does **not honor the Father**. It is useless to claim a love for God if one does not have the same love for the Lord Jesus Christ. If you have never realized before who Jesus Christ is, then ponder this verse carefully. Remember that it is the Word of God, and accept the glorious truth that Jesus Christ is God manifest in the flesh. (Borrow [Believer's Bible Commentary](#))

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## **Rod Mattoon on How Does the Christian Honor the Lord with His Life?**

### **1. By Sanctioning or Praising God**

Psalms 50:23—Whoso offereth praise glorifieth me: and to him that ordereth his conversation aright will I shew the salvation of God.

Brag on the Lord!

Daniel 4:37—Now I Nebuchadnezzar praise and extol and honour the King of heaven, all whose works are truth, and his ways judgment: and those that walk in pride he is able to abase.

### **2. By Spiritual Success and Growth**

John 15:8—Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples.

### **3. By Serving the Lord Jesus Christ**

Use your abilities for God's glory.

1 Peter 4:11—If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God; if any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth: that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

#### 4. By Singing about the Lord

Psalm 66:2—Sing forth the honour of his name: make his praise glorious.

#### 5. By Surrendering your Heart to the Lord

Matthew 15:8—This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me.

#### 6. By being Separated from Worldly, Carnal Living

A pure, clean, godly life honors the Lord.

2 Corinthians 6:14—Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?

2 Corinthians 6:17—Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you,

2 Timothy 2:20-21—But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and of silver, but also of wood and of earth; and some to honour, and some to dishonour. [21] If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the master's use, and prepared unto every good work.

#### 7. By Self Control

1 Thessalonians 4:4—That every one of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honour;

Proverbs 16:32—He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city.

[Treasures from John.](#)

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**Honor** (5091) **timao** for **time** = honor, prize) means to show high regard respect for and so to count as valuable, to esteem, to value, to honor or to revere. To show respect to someone is to recognize their worth as a person (and if they are a parent to recognize the validity of their role and their authority) and implies a considered evaluation or estimation. Therefore, **timao** means to ascribe worth to someone. To hold in awe. To assign value to something, including people considered as property (slaves). It means to fix a value or price upon something and so to prize it. The idea is to treat as precious! To honor is a social action describing how people within a society should evaluate one another. Honor usually results in people being elevated in the eyes of the community. Honoring involves a proper attitude as well as appropriate behavior.

**The Dictionary of Biblical Imagery** writes that "To **honor** someone or something is to acknowledge and show respect for the authority or worthiness of the object of one's honor. To show honor entails an affective side (a feeling of respect or reverence) and a set of outward manifestations, such as gestures (bowing before or being attentive) or actions (conferring titles or privileges). All these ways of showing honor elevate the person or thing that is honored. In addition to the primary meaning, honor is used in the Bible to name something possessed by certain people or things as an innate quality. (See online [Dictionary of Biblical Imagery](#))

**John 5:24 "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.**

BGT John 5:24 μ ν μ ν λ γω μ ν π ι τ ν λ γον μου κο ων κα πιστε ων τ π μψαντ με χει ζω ν α νιον κα ε ς κρ σιν ο κ ρχεται, λλ μεταβ βηκεν κ το θαν του ε ς τ ν ζω ν.

KJV John 5:24 Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.

NET John 5:24 "I tell you the solemn truth, the one who hears my message and believes the one who sent me

has eternal life and will not be condemned, but has crossed over from death to life.

CSB John 5:24 "I assure you: Anyone who hears My word and believes Him who sent Me has eternal life and will not come under judgment but has passed from death to life.

ESV John 5:24 Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life. He does not come into judgment, but has passed from death to life.

NIV John 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.

NLT John 5:24 "I tell you the truth, those who listen to my message and believe in God who sent me have eternal life. They will never be condemned for their sins, but they have already passed from death into life.

NRS John 5:24 Very truly, I tell you, anyone who hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life, and does not come under judgment, but has passed from death to life.

NJB John 5:24 In all truth I tell you, whoever listens to my words, and believes in the one who sent me, has eternal life; without being brought to judgement such a person has passed from death to life.

NAB John 5:24 Amen, amen, I say to you, whoever hears my word and believes in the one who sent me has eternal life and will not come to condemnation, but has passed from death to life.

YLT John 5:24 'Verily, verily, I say to you -- He who is hearing my word, and is believing Him who sent me, hath life age-during, and to judgment he doth not come, but hath passed out of the death to the life.

- **He who:** Jn 3:16,18,36 Jn 6:40,47 Jn 8:51 Jn 11:26 Jn 12:44 Jn 20:31 Mk 16:16 Ro 10:11-13 1Pe 1:21 1Jn 5:1,11-13
- **and does not:** Jn 10:27-30 Ro 8:1,16,17,28-30,33,34 1Th 5:9 2Th 2:13,14 1Pe 1:5
- **but:** 1Jn 3:14
- [John 5 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passages:

John 3:16+ "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.

John 3:18+ "He who believes in Him (JESUS) is not judged; he who does not believe has been judged already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.

John 3:36+ "He who believes in the Son has eternal life; but he who does not obey the Son will not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him."

John 6:40+ "For this is the will of My Father, that everyone who beholds the Son and believes in Him will have eternal life, and I Myself will raise him up on the last day."

John 6:47+ "Truly, truly, I say to you, he who believes has eternal life.

John 8:51+ "Truly, truly, I say to you, if anyone keeps [\(tereo\)](#) My word he will never see death."

John 11:26+ and everyone who lives and believes in Me will never die. Do you believe this?"

John 12:44+ And Jesus cried out and said, "He who believes in Me, does not believe in Me but in Him who sent Me.

John 20:31+ but these have been written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name.

Colossians 1:13+ (COMPARE "PASSED OUT OF DEATH INTO LIFE") For He rescued us from the domain of darkness, and **transferred** us to the kingdom of His beloved Son,

### ONE OF JESUS' MOST IMPORTANT DECLARATIONS!

[William MacDonald](#) - In the preceding verses, we learned that the Lord Jesus had the power to give life and that, also, the work of judgment had been committed to Him. Now we learn how one may receive spiritual life from Him and escape judgment. This is one of the favorite gospel verses in the Bible. Multitudes have become possessors of eternal life through its message. Doubtless the reason for its being so greatly loved is the manner in which it sets forth the way of salvation so clearly. (Borrow [Believer's Bible](#)



## [Commentary](#))

**Homer Kent** - This portion of the discussion not only provides information but is an implicit invitation to men to take advantage of all that Jesus provides. (Borrow [Light in the darkness : studies in the Gospel of John](#))

**Truly, truly** ([amen, amen](#)) - As discussed above (Jn. 5:19), this repetition of [amen](#) is like a doubling down on the truth, emphasizing the absolute truth of what follows (and the need to heed it!). We were all part of the "walking dead," (Eph 2:1), but in Christ we are now are all part of the "walking alive!" Hallelujah! Amen! It is interesting that the double amen is found in two successive verses only here in John (Jn 5:24, 25).

**MacArthur** adds that "The solemn phrase [amen, amen](#) (**truly, truly**) introduces an emphatic, unarguable declaration by Jesus."

**I say to you** - This is a very personal announcement originally to the antagonistic Jews but thereafter to every person who was antagonistic toward Jesus, which is EVERY one of us beloved! (cf Col 1:21, Ro 5:8, Ro 8:7-8, Titus 3:3). One can almost imagine Jesus eyes staring straight at the Jews who were planning to kill Him. Is this not incredible selfless love? They are plotting to take His life and He presents to them the way that they might experience eternal life!

**He who hears** (present tense) **My word** - The [Logos](#) speaks His [logos](#). **Hears** is not like "[in one ear and out the other](#)," but speaks of conscious, volitional, intelligent reception which shows itself to be true life giving hearing by subsequent obedience. The NET Bible has a note on **hears** stating it is tantamount to "obeys". James (Jesus' half brother) said it this way "**Butprove** yourselves **doers** of the word (OBEDIENCE), and not merely **hearers** ("IN ONE EAR AND OUT THE OTHER") who delude themselves (FOOL THEMSELVES INTO BELIEVING THAT HEARING IS SUFFICIENT TO ASSURE SALVATION OF ONE'S SOUL!)." (James 1:22+) To what **word** is Jesus referring? He is clearly describing the things He has already said about how one enters into the Kingdom of God and eternal life such as believing in the only begotten Son (e.g., Jn 3:3-8+ Jn 3:16+)

In modern English to **hear** means simply to perceive sound with one's ears, but this word carries a much deeper meaning in the Bible in many if not most of the uses. In other words, it is not enough to listen to the Words of Jesus but we must truly receive them. Think of it this way -- imagine Jesus is speaking on the FM band. We need to tune the "radios" of our hearts and minds to the "FM Band" (something that only the Holy Spirit can enable us to do) in order to genuinely receive and understand what He is saying. And then as we listen to it, we receive it as true (truth) and authoritative (powerful) and then we are to believe it and show that we truly believe it by obeying it (enabled the power of the Spirit, not the flesh!).

As [William MacDonald](#) warns, "Many people hear (**ED: SIMPLY HEAR THE "SOUND WAVES" SO TO SPEAK**) the Gospel preached, but do nothing about it. The Lord is saying here that a man must **accept** His teaching as divine, and **believe** that He is indeed the Savior of the world."

**Grant Osborne** on **hear** and **believe** - In John, hearing Jesus' word is a critical step to believing in him, as seen in Jn 1:37, 40 (the Baptist's disciples hear and follow) and Jn 4:42 (the Samaritan villagers hear and believe, cf. also Jn 6:63, 68). When Jesus encounters people with the claims of God, a faith-decision is the natural result. Those who respond "have eternal life" and "will never be condemned for their sins" (Jn 5:24). Note once more the already/not-yet tension of John. Eternal life is a present possession here; the believers have already "passed from death into life," though they have not yet begun their final life in eternity. The process is presented as a change of realms in which the believer has moved from one realm to the other. This concept is also utilized in Romans 5:12-6:11, in which death is personified as an evil force that reigns over mankind, while the believer is united to the death of Christ and therefore changes realms to live a new life in Christ. We who were dead in sin have now found life in Christ. (See [The Gospel of John](#))

**Heading** - Both hearing the word of the Son and believing on the Father are presented here as requisites for eternal life. (See Acts 20:21+ for a second set of two requisites.) Again, in John 3:16 it is belief in the Son, and in John 17:8 it is the word from the Father. ([What the Bible Teaches - John](#))

**And** - This is a very important connecting conjunction in this context. Why do I say that? Notice the two verbs that this conjunction connects - **hears** and **believes**. As alluded to above, it is not enough to just**hear** Jesus' words. One must**believe** Jesus' words. There are many who **hear** His words but do not **believe** them and the result is that they do not enter into eternal life. Remember that intellectual belief alone is not saving belief!

Mere mental assent to the truths of God's Word  
Is not the response God requires;  
Your total dependence on Christ from the heart  
Is what God our Father desires.

—Hess

**Guzik** has an interesting comment - With these words Jesus lifted Himself far about the level of any mere man. Think of it: "Hear My word and have everlasting life." This was either the babbling of an insane man or the words of God Himself. There is no neutral ground to be found here. (ED: OR AS [C. S. LEWIS' IN HIS TRILEMMA](#) SAID JESUS WAS EITHER "LUNATIC, LIAR OR LORD!" - [SEE ALSO](#))([John 5 Commentary](#))

**Believes** ([pisteuo](#)) **Him who sent Me, has eternal** ([aionios](#)) **life** ([zoe](#)) (cf Jn 12:44) - It is notable that Jesus does not say believes in Me, but in My Father, which reinforces the unity of the Father and Son. The converse is true -- don't say you believe in God (Father) but you don't believe in the Son (Jesus), because if you do you are lost! Belief in God the Father alone will save no one unless they believe in God the Son!

Notice the pattern in this passage. First, one has to hear Jesus' words. The implication is that one (believers today) needs to speak the Gospel to others, so that they can hear how it is possible to be saved and enter eternal life. Notice Jesus does not say will have but **has eternal life** meaning right now, for the present tense (of **has**) underscores the truth that one continually has eternal life! Stated another way **eternal life** means LIVING FOREVER WITH GOD which begins the day you believe in Jesus! It is not just your old life "*polished up*" (so to speak), but it is a brand new life that never existed before (see 2Co 5:17NET+ = "a new [kainos](#) creation!"). The key verb is **believes**, which calls for one to believe in their heart, not just in their head. Many people have an intellectual knowledge of Jesus and even His words, but they have never truly believed in their heart. Paul helps us understand this important distinction writing "if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your **heart** (NOT JUST YOUR HEAD!) that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved; for (TERM OF EXPLANATION - WHAT IS HE EXPLAINING?) with the **heart** a person **believes**, resulting in righteousness (GOD PLACES CHRIST'S PERFECT RIGHTEOUSNESS ON OUR SPIRITUAL BANK ACCOUNT), and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation." (Ro 10:9-10+).

Belief that saves a person is belief that obeys the Word of Truth. John linked believing with obeying writing that "He who **believes** in the Son has eternal life; but (TERM OF CONTRAST) he who **does not obey** the Son will not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him." (Jn 3:36+) The clear implication is that the only belief that leads to eternal life is belief that proves it is genuine belief by obedience (aka works) (See also notes on James 2:14-26). Don't be confused, for faith alone saves, but the faith that truly saves is not alone!

**A T Robertson** - **Has** now this spiritual life which is endless. See John 3:36. In John 5:24-25 Jesus speaks of spiritual life and spiritual death. In this passage (John 5:21-29) Jesus speaks now of physical life and death, now of spiritual, and one must notice carefully the quick transition. In Rev. 20:14 we have the phrase "the second death" with which language compare Rev. 20:4-6. ([Word Pictures of the New Testament](#))

**Homer Kent** - If one asks how the spiritually dead can hear and make a positive response to Christ's message, the answer is found in the analogy with the physical situation of the impotent man at the pool. He could obey the words of Christ to rise and take up his bed roll only because the One who spoke the message also provided the enablement. Similarly, Christ's message provides the power. The gospel is the power of God for salvation (Ro 1:16). Jesus not only shows the way to eternal life, He is the way (Jn 14:6). (Borrow [Light in the darkness : studies in the Gospel of John](#))

**William MacDonald** has some wise words on what Jesus means by **believes** - It is a matter of **believing** God. But does that mean that a person is saved simply by **believing** God? Many profess to **believe** in God, yet they have never been converted (Jn 3:3-8+). No, the thought here is that one must **believe** God, Who sent the Lord Jesus Christ into the world. What must he or she **believe**? They must **believe** that God sent the Lord Jesus to be our Savior. They must **believe** what God says about the Lord Jesus, namely, that He is the only Savior and that sins can only be put away through His work on Calvary. (Borrow [Believer's Bible Commentary](#))

[MacDonald](#) adds that eternal life "is the **life** of the Lord Jesus Christ (cf Col 3:4+, 2Co 4:10,11+, 1Jn 5:11, 12+, Jn 10:10b). It is not only **life** that will go on forever, but it is a (higher) **quality** of life. It is the **life** of the Savior imparted to us who believe in Him. It is the spiritual **life** received when a man is born again (Jn 3:3-8+), in contrast to the natural **life** which he received at his physical birth (cf 2Co 3:6+ - "the Spirit gives **life**"). (Borrow [Believer's Bible Commentary](#))

## NO CONDEMNATION FOR BELIEVERS

**And** - **And** is a "hinge word" that connects ideas or thoughts (and usually gets little respect) but this passage is very significant. This "**and**" describes the second advantage of believing the **word** of Jesus -- no **judgment** (explained below).

**Does not come into judgment** ([krisis](#)) - The NIV says "will not be condemned" and experience eternal death because "Christ died for us ([HIS DEATH IN OUR PLACE](#))." (Ro 5:8+). As Paul says "Therefore there is now **no condemnation** for those who are in Christ Jesus" (Ro 8:1+).

Jesus is not saying those who believe and receive eternal life will not experience a **judgment** of any kind. From other passages we know that believers will stand at **the judgment seat (bema) of Christ** (2Cor 5:10+), but this is not for judgment of their sins but to determine their reward. In Jn 5:24 Jesus is not speaking of the judgment of believers but the judgment of all who do not believe His word. In other words, all who refuse to believe in Jesus will suffer a "**krisis**" (judgment) which will indeed be their personal *crisis*! Their fate is to stand at the future **judgment** of non-believers at the **Great White Throne judgment**, be condemned and then be thrown into the eternal **lake of fire**. (Rev 20:11-14+)

*The Christian will never be punished for his sins.*

**William MacDonald** - The thought here is that he is not condemned now and will never be condemned in the future. The one who believes on the Lord Jesus is free from judgment because Christ has paid the penalty for his sins on Calvary. God will not demand the payment of this penalty twice (ED: AKA NO "**DOUBLE JEOPARDY!**"). Christ has paid it as our Substitute, and that is sufficient. He has finished the work (Jn 19:30+), and nothing can be added to a finished work. The Christian will never be punished for his sins. There are other verses which teach that a believer will one day stand before the Judgment Seat of Christ (Ro 14:10+; 2Co 5:10+). However, the question of his sins will not be brought up at that time for punishment. That question was settled at Calvary. At the Judgment Seat of Christ, the believer's life and service will be reviewed, and he will either receive rewards or suffer loss. It will not be then a question of his soul's salvation, but of his life's fruitfulness. (Borrow [Believer's Bible Commentary](#))

**Spurgeon** has a pithy comment - "It does not appear from our text that everlasting life is communicated by drops of water, or in any other ceremonial manner; but the command is, 'Hear, (ED: AND "BELIEVE") and your soul shall live.'"

**But** - This verse has one of the more important terms of contrast in the entire Bible! All mankind will be separated by this "**but**" into those with eternal death or eternal life.

**Has passed out (metabaino in perfect tense) of death (thanatos) into life (zoe)** - I like the picture of the NIV - "he has crossed over from death to life." The great exchange has taken place once and for all time, from spiritual death to spiritual life! **Has passed** is past tense (actually [perfect tense](#)) indicating that the moment a person believes, God's Spirit carries out an instantaneous transaction (cf Col 1:13+) and a person who formerly possessed spiritual death, now possesses eternal life. And the signifies it is "one and done" so to speak, indicating this transfer is permanent. Once saved (assuming genuine), always saved! And believers do not have to wait for heaven to receive eternal life ([zoe](#)), for they entered into the sphere of eternal life ([zoe](#)) the moment they believed. Believers can now experience a new quality of life and even in this fallen world can experience abundant life (Jn 10:10b+).

**THOUGHT** - Dear believer in the Son of God, are you experiencing abundant life in Christ? That is Jesus' desire for every believer! (see Jn 10:10b+).

**Heading** - Certainly in our verse we have the eternal security of the believer, because the verb "**is passed**" in "**is passed from death unto life**" is in the [perfect tense](#), namely *metabebēken*, implying the lasting effects after the original event. The fact that the passage from death to life in a believer has already taken place does not deny the resurrection of the body in the future; Paul had to contend with such a doctrine (2Ti 2:18), for its proponents were overthrowing the faith of some. ([What the Bible Teaches - John](#))

**A T Robertson** - Perfect active indicative of metabainō, to pass from one place or state to another. Out of spiritual death into spiritual life and so no judgement ([krisis](#)). ([Word Pictures of the New Testament](#))

**Kenneth Wuest on life** - The ethical and spiritual qualities of this life which God is, are communicated to the sinner when the latter places his faith in the Lord Jesus as Saviour, and this becomes the new, animating, energizing, motivating principle which transforms the experience of that individual, and the saint thus lives a Christian life. ([Eerdmans Publishing](#) - used by permission)

**Adam Clarke** - "Has changed his country, or place of abode. Death is the country where every Christless soul lives. The man who knows not God lives a dying life, or a living death; but he who believes in the Son of God passes over from the empire of death, to the empire of life." ([John 5 Commentary](#))

**Spurgeon's Exposition** - If we truly believe the word of Christ, and trust in Him Who sent His Son into the world, we have at this moment everlasting life. What a grand verse this is! It is worthy to be written in letters of gold at every street corner; would that we all knew the fullness of its meaning by heartfelt experience!

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**Believes** (4100) [pisteuo](#) from [pistis](#); [pistos](#); related studies [the faith](#), the [obedience of faith](#)) means to consider something to be true and therefore worthy of one's trust. To accept as true, genuine, or real. To have a firm conviction as to the goodness, efficacy, or ability of something or someone. To consider to be true. To accept the word or evidence of. The respected Greek lexicon author **W E Vine** defines belief as consisting of

(1) a firm conviction which produces full acknowledgment of God's revelation of Truth - (2Th 2:11+ -"in order

that they all may be judged who did not **believe** [pisteuo] the truth, but took pleasure in wickedness.")

(2) a personal surrender to the Truth (Jn 1:12+ "But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who **believe** [pisteuo] in His name") and

(3) a conduct inspired by and consistent with that surrender.

**Judgment** (justice, court, sentence)(2920) **krisis** from **krino** = primarily means to separate, distinguish) means a decision or judgment, verdict, justice, court (tribunal). The first use is by Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount declaring "'Whoever commits murder shall be liable to the **court**.'" ("in danger of judgment") (Mt 5:21, cp also Mt 5:22) Mt 10:15, 11:22, 24 all describe Jesus' sobering warning to the Jews of a specific future and frightening "day of **judgment**." (cp "**sentence** of hell" Mt 23:33, see also 2 Peter 2:9, 11, 3:7, 1 John 4:17) In Jn 5:24 Jesus gives sinners the way of escape, the way to miss the horrible day of **judgment** (Heb 10:27)! In Mt 12:18 God's **judgment** is equated with **justice**, for He is the righteous and just Judge (cp Mt 12:20, 23:23, Rev 16:7). Note the striking contrast in Jn 5:29 "those who did the good deeds to a resurrection of life, those who committed the evil deeds to a resurrection of **judgment**." There is no such thing as reincarnation but only one life, one death, one **judgment** (Heb 9:27)

Note that **krisis** is the root word for **crisis** (n.) early 15 century., **crise**, **crisis**, "decisive point in the progress of a disease," also "vitally important or decisive state of things, **point at which change must come**, for better or worse," from Latinized form of Greek **krisis** "turning point in a disease, **that change which indicates recovery or death**" (ED: THINK OF SIN AS A DEADLY VIRUS! JESUS TOOK THE STING OF THAT VIRUS FOR US!) (used as such by Hippocrates and Galen), literally "judgment, result of a trial, selection," from krinein "to separate, decide, judge," from PIE root \*krei- "to sieve," thus "discriminate, distinguish." - [Etymology Online](#)

**Life** (2222) **zoe** in Scripture is used (1) to refer to **physical life** (Ro 8:38+, 1Co 3:22, Php 1:20+, Jas 4:14, etc) but more often to (2) to **supernatural life** in contrast to a life subject to eternal death (Jn 3:36, see all 43 uses of "eternal life" below). This quality of life speaks of fullness of life which alone belongs to God the Giver of life and is available to His children now (Ro 6:4+, Ep 4:18+) as well as in eternity future (Mk 10:30, Titus 1:2 see [note](#) on Eternal Life).

Wuest writes that **zoe** "speaks of **life** in the sense of one who is possessed of vitality and animation. **It is used of the absolute fulness of life,**

**both essential and ethical, which belongs to God.** It is used to designate the life which God gives to the believing sinner, a vital, animating, spiritual, ethical dynamic which transforms his inner being and as a result, his behavior."

**Richards** writes that "Zoe in classical Greek refers to natural life--the principle that enables living things to move and to grow. In the NT, zoe focuses on the theological meaning rather than on the biological. From the perspective of the NT, in every respect life is the counterpart of death. Each book of the NT speaks of zoe. In each, the principle of life lifts our vision beyond our earthly existence to reveal a unique quality of life that spans time and eternity and that has its roots in God. It is the biblical use and meaning of zoe that most concerns us as we examine what the NT says about life. (Borrow [Expository Dictionary of Bible Words](#))

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## Joe Wall - JUDGMENT OF UNBELIEVERS

According to the Bible, God's judgment will focus on unbelievers during three different periods. The Bible also teaches that the Father gave to Jesus—the Messiah—full authority to carry out or execute all of these judgments (John 5:22-29).

### JUDGMENT IN THE TRIBULATION PERIOD

First, the Bible prophesies that there will be a seven-year period of judgment called the Tribulation period (Daniel 9:27; Matthew 24:15-21). During the last, terrifying three and a half years of this time, Jesus Christ will express the holy indignation of God as He pours out unquenchable wrath upon the world. This is described in detail in the book of Revelation 5-18.

### JUDGMENT AT THE SECOND ADVENT

When Jesus returns to the earth in triumph at the end of the Tribulation period, He will judge the nations. Commonly known as the second advent, this second coming climaxes this evil age and introduces the messianic age of peace and righteousness.

Israel and the Gentile nations will be judged, and those who are believers will be ushered into the messianic kingdom. Those who are not believers, will be cast into the "everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels." (See Matthew 24:25, 25:32-46)

### JUDGMENT AT THE GREAT WHITE THRONE

The last judgment of unbelievers will take place before the great white throne and is often called the Great White Throne judgment. At the end of the first phase of the messianic kingdom (which we call the Millennium because it will be one thousand years in length)

Jesus will judge everyone who has rejected God's provision of salvation by grace.

The biblical picture of the great white throne room is straightforward and to the point. Jesus sits on His throne (John 5), and everybody who does not know Christ as Savior stands before Him to be judged (Revelation 20:11-14). (Borrow [Going for the Gold](#))

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#### QUESTION - [What is eternal life?](#)

**ANSWER** - When the Bible speaks of eternal life, it refers to a gift of God that comes only "through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Romans 6:23). This gift is in contrast to the "death" that is the natural result of sin.

The gift of eternal life comes to those who believe in Jesus Christ, who is Himself "the resurrection and the life" (John 11:25). The fact that this life is "eternal" indicates that it is *perpetual* life—it goes on and on and on, with no end.

It is a mistake, however, to view eternal life as simply an unending progression of years. A common New Testament word for "eternal" is *aiónios*, which carries the idea of *quality* as well as *quantity*. In fact, eternal life is not really associated with "years" at all, as it is independent of time. Eternal life can function outside of and beyond time, as well as within time.

For this reason, eternal life can be thought of as something that Christians experience *now*. Believers don't have to "wait" for eternal life, because it's not something that starts when they die. Rather, eternal life begins the moment a person exercises faith in Christ. It is our current possession. John 3:36 says, "Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life." Note that the believer "has" (present tense) this life (the verb is present tense in the Greek, too). We find similar present-tense constructions in John 5:24 and John 6:47. The focus of eternal life is not on our future, but on our current standing in Christ.

The Bible inextricably links eternal life with the Person of Jesus Christ. John 17:3 is an important passage in this regard, as Jesus prays, "Now this is eternal life: that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent." Here, Jesus equates "eternal life" with a knowledge of God and of the Son. There is no knowledge of God without the Son, for it is through the Son that the Father reveals Himself to the elect (John 17:6; 14:9).

This life-giving knowledge of the Father and the Son is a true, personal knowledge, not just an academic awareness. There will be some on Judgment Day who had claimed to be followers of Christ but never really had a relationship with Him. To those false professors, Jesus will say, "I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!" (Matthew 7:23). The apostle Paul made it his goal to *know* the Lord, and he linked that knowledge to resurrection from the dead: "I want to know Christ—yes, to know the power of his resurrection and participation in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, and so, somehow, attaining to the resurrection from the dead" (Philippians 3:10–11).

In the [New Jerusalem](#), the apostle John sees a river flowing from "the throne of God and of the Lamb," and "on each side of the river stood the [tree of life](#). . . . And the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations" (Revelation 22:1–2). In Eden, we rebelled against God and were banished from the tree of life (Genesis 3:24). In the end, God graciously restores our access to the tree of life. This access is provided through Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world (John 1:29).

Right now, every sinner is invited to know Christ and to receive eternal life: "Let the one who is thirsty come; and let the one who wishes take the free gift of the water of life" (Revelation 22:17).

How can you [know that you have eternal life](#)? First of all, confess your sin before our holy God. Then accept God's provision of a Savior on your behalf. "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved" (Romans 10:13). Jesus Christ, the Son of God, died for your sins, and He rose again the third day. Believe this good news; trust the Lord Jesus as your Savior, and you will be saved (Acts 16:31; Romans 10:9–10).

John puts it so simply: "God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life" (1 John 5:11–12). [GotQuestions.org](#)

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#### QUESTION - [Got Eternal Life? Do you know for sure that you will have eternal life in Heaven with God?](#) See [accompanying video](#).

**ANSWER** - The Bible presents a clear path to eternal life. First, we must recognize that we have sinned against God: "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23). We have all done things that are displeasing to God, which makes us deserving of punishment. Since all our sins are ultimately against an eternal God, only an eternal punishment is sufficient. "The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Romans 6:23). However, Jesus Christ, the sinless (1 Peter 2:22), eternal Son of God became a man (John 1:1,14) and died to pay our penalty. "God demonstrates His love for us in this: while we were still sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8). Jesus Christ died on the cross (John 19:31-42), taking the punishment that we deserve (2 Corinthians 5:21). Three days later He rose from the dead (1 Corinthians 15:1-4), proving His victory



over sin and death. "In His great mercy He has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead" (1 Peter 1:3).

By faith, we must change our mindset regarding Christ - who He is, what He did, and why - for salvation (Acts 3:19). If we place our faith in Him, trusting His death on the cross to pay for our sins, we will be forgiven and receive the promise of eternal life in heaven. "For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son so that anyone who believes in Him will not perish but have eternal life" (John 3:16). "If you confess with your mouth, 'Jesus is Lord,' and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved" (Romans 10:9). Faith alone in the finished work of Christ on the cross is the only true path to eternal life! "For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith - and this not of yourselves, it is the gift of God - not by works, so that no one can boast" (Ephesians 2:8-9).

If you want to accept Jesus Christ as your Savior, here is a sample prayer. Remember, saying this prayer or any other prayer will not save you. It is only trusting in Christ that can save you from sin. This prayer is simply a way to express to God your faith in Him and thank Him for providing for your salvation. "God, I know that I have sinned against you and deserve punishment. But Jesus Christ took the punishment that I deserve so that through faith in Him I could be forgiven. I place my trust in You for salvation. Thank You for Your wonderful grace and forgiveness - the gift of eternal life! Amen!"

Have you made a decision for Christ because of what you have read here? If so, please click on the "I have accepted Christ today" button on the following page. [GotQuestions.org](http://GotQuestions.org)

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#### Related Resources:

- [How can I know for sure that I will go to heaven when I die? | GotQuestions.org](http://GotQuestions.org)
- [Is there life after death? | GotQuestions.org](http://GotQuestions.org)
- [What does it mean that the gift of God is eternal life \(Romans 6:23\)? | GotQuestions.org](http://GotQuestions.org)
- [What does it mean to know Jesus? | GotQuestions.org](http://GotQuestions.org)

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#### To Be Sure

These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life. —1 John 5:13

Today's Scripture: 1 John 5:1-13

Evangelist Dwight L. Moody (1837-1899) said, "I believe hundreds of Christians are being deceived by Satan now on this point: They don't have the assurance of salvation just because they are not willing to take God at His Word!"

**John 5:24 says the person who believes on the Son "has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment."** Our assurance, then, is not based primarily on how we feel but on what God says. And when we take God at His Word, the feeling often follows.

This is **illustrated** in the story of a man who was carrying a sack of potatoes on his back. A skeptic asked him, "How do you know you are saved?" The man let the potatoes fall and replied, "How do I know I have dropped the bag? I didn't see it fall." "No," replied the skeptic, "but you can tell, I suppose, by the lessening of the weight." "Exactly," said the Christian. "That's how I know I'm saved too. I have lost my load of sin, and have found peace in my Lord and Savior."

If you will first trust in Christ and believe His Word, your burden of guilt and doubt will fall. Then and only then will you feel the difference. Don't make the mistake of trying to get the feeling before you do the believing. By: Henry G. Bosch ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

I do not rest on shifting sand,  
Or fear the storm that rages;  
For calm and sure, I stand secure  
Upon the Rock of Ages.  
—Anon.

Because God's Word is trustworthy, your salvation is secure.

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#### Yes Or No?

This is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent. — John

Today's Scripture: John 5:24-40

If God were to give professing believers a quiz on Christianity, many would score well. They would be able to answer “Yes, it’s true” to questions such as:

- Did Christ die for your sins?
- Did He rise from the dead?
- Is He coming back to earth?

Pastor and author Bruce Larson says that he grew up saying yes to these types of biblical doctrines. But eventually he sensed that God was asking him some new questions:

1. Will you trust Me with your life, yes or no?
2. Will you entrust yourself to My church family, yes or no?
3. Will you serve Me by getting involved with others, yes or no?

Only when Larson said yes to these questions did God become real in his life.

To the religious leaders of His day, Jesus said, “You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me. But you are not willing to come to Me that you may have life” (John 5:39-40). Jesus was saying, in effect, “You can answer true to many facts of Scripture, but you won’t say yes to Me.”

Can you say you agree with many facts in the written Word but you haven’t said yes to Christ, the Living Word? Then do it now, and Jesus will turn your head knowledge into a life-changing heart knowledge. By: Joanie Yoder

It’s not enough to know the facts of salvation—you must also know the Savior.

### Prepare To Celebrate

He who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life. —John 5:24

Today's Scripture: John 5:24-29

In 1983, Ed Woodyard decided where he wanted to spend New Year’s Eve 1999. After some discussion with a reservation agent, he booked a room at a hotel which hadn’t been built yet—the Marriott Marquis that would overlook Times Square in New York City. Now that’s triple faith—that the day will arrive, that the hotel will be built, and that he will still be around.

It shouldn’t seem strange, then, that Christians are preparing to attend a grand event God has planned for all who belong to Him through faith in Christ. Revelation describes it as the wedding celebration of Jesus and His bride, the church (Rev. 19:7-9).

Perhaps you have thoughtfully considered receiving Christ as your Savior from sin and placing your life in His hands, but for some reason you’ve never made that commitment. Jesus said, “He who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life” (Jn. 5:24).

The celebration has been planned and the day will come. Will you be there? Will you accept God’s invitation? Receive Jesus Christ today so that your name will be included on the guest list. By: David C. McCasland ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Salvation is a gift of God,  
Not something earned or won;  
He freely gives eternal life  
To all who trust His Son. —Sper

Accept God's invitation if you want to join God's celebration.

### Going Up

He who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life. — John 5:24

Today's Scripture: John 5:17-30

A few years ago, a TV ad for life insurance showed a businessman walking across a busy city street. He leaped for the curb as a car veered toward him. Somewhat ruffled, he said, "That was close! I didn't think I was going to make it." Suddenly two men in white suits joined him on the busy street, and one of them said, "You didn't!"

As the three men began walking together, the businessman remarked that at least he had peace of mind because his family was covered by insurance. But the real punchline came at the end of the ad. While the man and his two escorts were riding an escalator up into the clouds, he said with relief, "I'm sure glad we're going up!"

That last line was meant to provide some comic relief, but for the thoughtful person it raises the serious issue of heaven and hell. It reminds us of Jesus' words in John 5:17-30 that not all people are "going up." He said that some would experience "the resurrection of life" and others "the resurrection of condemnation" (v.29). Jesus is the only One who can give eternal life to all who trust in Him.

Have you considered God's offer of salvation? Why not put your trust in Christ today? You will then be able to say with confidence, "I'm sure glad I'm going up!" By: Mart DeHaan ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

If God is calling you today,  
Then trust in Christ without delay;  
Tomorrow it may be too late,  
For death's grim hand could seal your fate.  
—Sper

Why we are here is important; where we are going is most important.

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## An Eternal Future

He who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and . . . has passed from death into life. —John 5:24

Today's Scripture: John 5:24-29

Some countries are very old. Their history stretches far into the distant past. Others are fairly new to the world map. Yet, while all nations are destined to disappear, every human soul is destined to live eternally.

This prompted C. S. Lewis to say, "If we had foolish unchristian hopes about human culture, they are now shattered. If we thought we were building up a heaven on earth, if we looked for something that would turn the present world from a place of pilgrimage into a permanent city satisfying the soul of man, we are disillusioned, and not a moment too soon."

Civilizations will fall, but the human soul will live on forever. And because every individual will one day stand and face God's judgment (Hebrews 9:27), the most important question is how each of us will spend the endless ages stretching before us. Will we be with God in indescribable glory and joy? Or will we be exiled from God, lost forever in a condition too horrible for language to describe?

What a responsibility rests on believers! We must tell people that the only way to spend eternity in God's presence is to accept His offer of forgiveness and reconciliation (John 5:24). By God's grace, we can begin rejoicing in eternal life with Him right now! By: Vernon Grounds ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

There is a place reserved in heaven  
For all who have believed;  
Eternal life is freely given  
When humbly it's received.  
—Sper

When you open your heart to Jesus, heaven is open to you.

**John 5:25 "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 will live.**

BGT John 5:25 μ ν μ ν λ γ ω μ ν τ ι ρ χεται ρ α κ α ν ν σ τ ι ν τ ε ο ν εκρο κο σου σ ι ν τ ς φ ω ν ς τ ο υ ο τ ο θεο  
κα ο κο σαντες ζ σου σ ι ν.

KJV John 5:25 Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live.

NET John 5:25 I tell you the solemn truth, a time is coming— and is now here— when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live.

CSB John 5:25 "I assure you: An hour is coming, and is now here, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live.

ESV John 5:25 "Truly, truly, I say to you, an hour is coming, and is now here, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live.

NIV John 5:25 I tell you the truth, a time is coming and has now come when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God and those who hear will live.

NLT John 5:25 "And I assure you that the time is coming, indeed it's here now, when the dead will hear my voice-- the voice of the Son of God. And those who listen will live.

NRS John 5:25 "Very truly, I tell you, the hour is coming, and is now here, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live.

- **hour:** Jn 4:23, Jn 13:1, Jn 17:1
- **when:** Jn 5:21,28 Lu 9:60 Lk 15:24,32 Ro 6:4 Eph 2:1,5 5:14 Col 2:13 Rev 3:1
- [John 5 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passages:

John 4:23 "But **an hour is coming, and now is**, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for such people the Father seeks to be His worshipers.

## LIFE FROM DEATH

John 5:25-29 deal with resurrection, something both saved and unsaved will experience.

**Truly, truly** ([amen](#), [amen](#)) - This is the third solemn repetition of [amen](#) which is Jesus' way of emphasizing the certainty and importance of the truth He is about to declare. Imagine the thoughts of the Jewish leaders as they listened to Jesus' incredible declaration of His power over life and death. Sadly most of them just "listened" but few actually "heard" (received) His incredible Word of Truth that alone was able to set captives (to sin, Satan, world) free (Jn 8:32).

As noted above this is the only place in the Gospel of John where we find two successive passages beginning with "Truly, Truly."

**I say to you, an hour is coming and now is - To you** is the Jews who were persecuting Him and seeking to kill Him! Once again we see the infinite, absolutely [amazing love](#) of God in offering His persecutors a path to spiritual freedom. The **hour is coming** is not a reference to 60 minutes but is a prophecy speaking of a future event, but also an event that has already arrived as the next word **now** emphasizes. In other words, **NOW** all who have believed in Christ have attained to a spiritual resurrection here and **now!** (cf Col 3:1+, Col 2:12+, Ro 6:4+, Eph 2:6+)

**Now** reminds me of Paul's words "**Behold, NOW** is the Day of Salvation!" (2Co 6:2+). Some (including some of everyone who has read these words of Jesus) who heard **now** (today) would believe and would **live** spiritually (as in Jn 5:24 where **hears** is followed by **believes**).

Another way that it is "**now**" is that when the Jews (who were dead spiritually Eph 2:1+) heard Jesus' sobering words they were **now** accountable to how they responded. God's Truth always demands a response (this is true for believers and non-believers!) Contrast the meaning of **hour...now is** in this verse with the meaning of **hour** in Jn 5:28 where Jesus refers only to an **hour** in the future. (see [Table below](#))

**Homer Kent** - Although Jn 5:25 is similar to Jn 5:28, the inclusion of the phrase "**and now is**," along with the absence of the mention of graves, makes it clear that [regeneration](#) (ED: [note](#)) is in view in Jn 5:25, rather than physical resurrection (**ED: BUT THE PHRASE "AN HOUR IS COMING" COULD REFER TO THE FUTURE PHYSICAL RESURRECTION OF BELIEVERS - SEE MACARTHUR BELOW**). At present Christ is calling men from spiritual death (separation from God) into a condition of spiritual life (sharing of God's life forever) on the basis of trust in Christ's work on their behalf. (Borrow [Light in the darkness : studies in the Gospel of John](#))

**David Thompson** - Now when you first read verse 25, it appears to be very similar to verse 28 in that both say **“an hour is coming.”** But there is a difference between verse 25 and verse 28 in that verse 25 contains the words **“and now is.”** Those three little words inform us that in the present time, **Jesus Christ has power to give some type of life to one who is dead** The particular life being referred to in these verses is **spiritual life**, not physical life (John 11:25-26). Listen, we are living in the **“how is”** time and right now you can have eternal life. But in order to get eternal life, you must **listen** to what Christ is saying - namely you must **believe** only in Him for life. He is the only One who can give a sinner life. ([Sermon](#))

**Stevenson** on **is coming, now is** - This is not speaking of a physical resurrection. The Bible does teach of a physical resurrection, but this is not it. This is speaking of a spiritual resurrection. It is only those who partake of the spiritual resurrection who will one day benefit from the physical resurrection (**ED: THIS COMING PHYSICAL RESURRECTION WOULD SEEM TO BE DEPICTED BY THE PHRASE "AN HOUR IS COMING"**).

**John MacArthur** has an additional thought on the time phrase **hour...coming...now is** noting that it "reveals an already/not yet tension regarding the resurrection. Those who are born again are already "spiritually" resurrected ("**now is**"; Eph 2:1; Col 2:13), and yet a future physical resurrection still awaits them ("hour is coming"; 1Co 15:35-54; Php 3:20, 21). (Borrow [The MacArthur Study Bible](#))

**When the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live**- Note the dramatic contrast - **dead...live**. This is a "life and death" verse! Note also the [keyword](#) - **hear**. The first **hear** is literal hearing of the sound of the Son's voice and the second is hearing and understanding the message. When they hear (implicit that that they believe what they hear and heed what they hear), those who are spiritually dead will be supernaturally made spiritually alive. Note the paradox of dead men who hear, clearly indicating the Spirit's enabling power to a spiritual dead person who can hear spiritual truth and respond by faith. Clearly, God is in control of our new birth!

**Swindoll** says it this way "His phrasing in Jn 5:25 is interesting because the verb **“to hear”** takes a double meaning. “The dead [all of humanity that has died] will **hear** the voice of the Son of God,” but only **“those who hear”** will receive life. The first **“hearing”** is literal; that is, mere exposure to the sound of His voice. The second has to do with comprehending the message and believing it. The irony, of course, is that dead people cannot **hear** anything. His statement has both a present and a future aspect. He will summon the dead to judgment on the final day; however, the “dead” can receive life now! (Borrow [Insights on John](#))

Who are **the dead** from the context? The **dead** in this verse are not the **dead** who are in the graves as in Jn 5:28 where the **dead** includes all who are in the tombs, both believers and non-believers ([see chart](#)). So who are the **dead** who will **hear and live**? There are two answers. First, there are the 3 individuals who heard the voice of Jesus ("the Word") and physically rose from the dead - The young man in Lk 7:14-15+, Jairus' daughter in Mk 5:41+ and Lazarus in Jn 11:44+. The broader and more significant meaning refers to those individuals who are spiritually **dead** in their sins (Eph 2:1+ - all of us at one time), but who will **hear** (idea is to **hear** and appropriately act on what is heard) and believe the words of Jesus and receive eternal life (**they live**) (cf Jn 18:37). Paul says it this way "even when we were **dead** in our transgressions, (God) **made us alive** together with ([suzoopoieo](#)) Christ (by grace you have been saved [= "made alive"])." (Eph 2:5+, cf Eph 5:14+).

**John MacArthur** sees another meaning of the statement **hour...coming...now is** - The **already/not yet** sense of the phrase may also be understood in another way. While Christ was present, He offered spiritual life to all who would heed His words (Jn 6:37; Matt. 7:24-27; cf. John 14:6). Yet the full expression of the new era He inaugurated would not come until the day of Pentecost (Jn 14:17). Both during Christ's earthly ministry (e.g., Jn 4:39-42, 53), and in the fullness of the Spirit's ministry after Pentecost, the spiritually dead who responded to the voice of the Son of God would live in the Spirit (cf. Ro 8:1-11).

**Charles Swindoll** on **hear** - The irony, of course, is that dead people cannot hear anything. His statement has both a present and a future aspect. He will summon the dead to judgment on the final day; however, the (ED: SPIRITUALLY) “dead” can receive (ED: SPIRITUAL) life now. (Borrow [Insights on John](#))

Note that this is the first time Jesus called Himself the **Son of God** in front of the Jewish authorities (in John's Gospel), which would have heightened their hostility toward Him. Earlier He used this term but it was with Nicodemus by himself (John 3:18+).

**Son of God** is used 9x/9v in John - John 1:34 John 1:49 John 3:18 John 5:25 John 10:36 John 11:4 John 11:27 John 19:7 John 20:31

**Jamieson** on **the dead** - The spiritually **dead**...Here He rises from the calmer phrase “hears My word” (Jn 5:24), to the grander expression, **“hear the voice of the Son of God”** to signify that as it finds men in a dead condition, so it carries with it a resurrection-power (**Carson** calls it "vivifying power." Borrow [The Gospel according to John](#))

**John Trap** on **the dead** - The **dead** in sins shall believe the promises, and shall live the life of grace here and of glory in heaven.



**D A Carson** - Here, however, the coming **hour** already is (**now is**): the resurrection life for the physically dead in the end time is already being manifest as life for the spiritually dead (Eph 2:1). It is the voice of **the Son of God** (or his word: cf. Jn 5:24; 6:63, 68; 11:43) that calls forth the dead, and those who **hear** (Jn 5:24 "hears and believes") **will live**. Such a voice, such a life-giving word, is nothing other than the voice of God (cf. Is. 55:3), Whose vivifying power mediates the life-giving Spirit (cf. Jn 3:3, 5; Jn 7:37–39) even to dry bones (Ezek 37:1-28). (Borrow [The Gospel according to John](#))

**Warren Wiersbe** - Jesus described the resurrection of lost sinners into eternal life (see Jn 5:24-25; Ep 2:1-10). The lost sinner is as lifeless and helpless as a corpse. No matter how an undertaker may prepare a corpse, it is still dead; and no corpse is "deader" than any other corpse. If you are dead, you are dead! The lost sinner is helpless to save himself and he certainly cannot give himself life. How are dead sinners raised from the dead? By hearing God's Word and believing on God's Son. Jesus healed the paralyzed man at the pool by His word (Jn 5:8). Each time He raised somebody from the dead, He spoke the word (Lk 7:11-17; 8:49-56; John 11:41-44). His Word is "living and powerful" (Heb. 4:12) and can raise sinners from spiritual death. "Everlasting life" means that they can never die spiritually again, nor can they ever come into judgment (Ro 8:1). To hear His Word and believe means salvation; to reject His Word means condemnation (John 12:48). (Borrow [Be alive John 1-12: Get to Know the Living Savior](#))

**Michaels** has an interesting note on the meaning of **hear** - The verb "to **hear**" is used differently in different pronouncements. In Jn 5:24, one must not only "**hear**" the word ( κουε v with the accusative), but also "**believe**" what is said (πιστεύειν with the dative). In Jn 5:25, to "**hear**" the Son of God's voice ( κουε v with the genitive) means to take heed, or to **hear and obey**, implying **belief**. In vv. 28–29, all who are physically dead will "hear his voice" (again κουε v with the genitive), but this time "hear" does not necessarily imply belief, for not all will attain a "resurrection of life" (v. 29) (Borrow [The Gospel of John](#))

<b>COMPARISON OF THE RESURRECTIONS IN Jn 5:25 AND Jn 5:28-29</b>	
<b>LIFE FROM DEATH SPIRITUAL RESURRECTION</b>	<b>LIFE AFTER DEATH PHYSICAL RESURRECTION</b>
An hour is coming and now is	An hour is coming
The dead	All who are in the tombs
Will hear the voice	Will hear His voice
Those who hear will live	And will come forth
See also <a href="#">flow chart below by Charles Swindoll</a>	

**John 5:26 "For just as the Father has life in Himself, even so He gave to the Son also to have life in Himself;**

BGT John 5:26 σπερ γ ρ πατρ ρ χει ζω v v αυτ , ο τω ς κα τ υ δω κεν ζω v χει v αυτ .

KJV John 5:26 For as the Father hath life in himself; so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself;

NET John 5:26 For just as the Father has life in himself, thus he has granted the Son to have life in himself,

CSB John 5:26 For just as the Father has life in Himself, so also He has granted to the Son to have life in Himself.

ESV John 5:26 For as the Father has life in himself, so he has granted the Son also to have life in himself.

NIV John 5:26 For as the Father has life in himself, so he has granted the Son to have life in himself.

NLT John 5:26 The Father has life in himself, and he has granted that same life-giving power to his Son.

NRS John 5:26 For just as the Father has life in himself, so he has granted the Son also to have life in himself;

NJB John 5:26 For as the Father has life in himself, so he has granted the Son also to have life in himself;

NAB John 5:26 For just as the Father has life in himself, so also he gave to his Son the possession of life in himself.

YLT John 5:26 for, as the Father hath life in himself, so He gave also to the Son to have life in himself,

- **has life:** Ex 3:14 Ps 36:9 90:2 Jer 10:10 Ac 17:25 1Ti 1:17 6:16
- **even so:** Jn 1:4 Jn 4:10 Jn 7:37,38 Jn 8:51 Jn 11:26 Jn 14:6,19 Jn 17:2,3 1Co 15:45 Col 3:3,4 1Jn 1:1-3 Rev 7:17 21:6 22:1,17
- [John 5 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passages:

Exodus 3:14+ God said to Moses, **'I AM WHO I AM'** (LIFE IN HIMSELF!); and He said, "Thus you shall say to the sons of Israel, 'I AM has sent me to you.'"

John 8:51 "Truly, truly ([amen, amen](#)), I say to you, if anyone keeps My word he will never see death." (NOTE HOW ONE ELEMENT OF GENUINE BELIEF IS KEEPING JESUS' WORD.)

John 11:25-26 Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in Me will live even if he dies, and everyone who lives and believes in Me will never die. Do you believe this?"

John 14:6 Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the **life**; no one comes to the Father but through Me.

John 17:2; 3 even as You gave Him authority over all flesh, that to all whom You have given Him, He may give eternal **life**. 3 "This is eternal **life**, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.

1 John 1:1-3 What was from the beginning, what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we have looked at and touched with our hands, concerning the Word of **Life**— 2 and the **life** was manifested, and we have seen and testify and proclaim to you the eternal **life**, which was with the Father and was manifested to us— 3 what we have seen and heard we proclaim to you also, so that you too may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ.

## JESUS GIVER OF LIFE

**For** ([gar](#) - Term of explanation) For indicates that this verse explains the previous verse - how a person can receive life from Jesus. Christ can give eternal **life** because He Himself possesses **life**. He not only has a part in giving it, He is the Source of it. This is another testimony to Jesus' deity, because only God has life in Himself (Jn 17:2-3 Col 3:3-4)..

**Just as the Father** ([pater](#)) **has** (present tense = continually has) **life** ([zoe](#)) **in Himself** (cf Ex 3:14+), **even so He gave to the Son also to have life in Himself** - Once again note the phrases **just as....even so** which emphasize the equality and oneness between the **Father** and the **Son**. This declaration by Jesus echoes the opening words of John's gospel that point out that "In Him (THE WORD = JESUS) was **life**, and the **life** was the Light of men." (Jn 1:4+) The Jewish leaders knew what Jesus was claiming by His possessing life like His Father, and it is similar to those times with when He referred to Himself as "I Am." To use a theological term, Jesus was saying that He was [Self-existent](#) or possessed [aseity](#)!

**A T Robertson** on **in Himself** - The Living God possesses life wholly in himself and so he has bestowed this power of life to the Son as already stated in the Prologue of the Logos (John 1:3). ([Word Pictures of the New Testament](#))

**John MacArthur** explains what it means that the Father **gave to the Son...life** - The Son from all eternity had the right to grant life (Jn 1:4+). The distinction involves Jesus' deity versus His incarnation. In becoming a man, Jesus voluntarily set aside the independent exercise of His divine attributes and prerogatives (Php 2:6-11+). Jesus here affirmed that even in His humanity, the Father granted Him "life-giving" power, i.e., the power of resurrection (Jn 5:20). (Borrow [The MacArthur Study Bible](#))

**Heading** has a slightly different interpretation - The life of the Son is bound up with the life of the Father. Here, the Father has given life to the Son; He has also given Him the Spirit (John 3:34-35), and glory (17:24). These are the eternal possessions of Deity; there was no time when the Son did not possess these things. By saying that the Father had given life to the Son, no doubt the Lord refers to the fact that in Manhood He did not cease to possess that eternal life. Believers now possess eternal life that stretches into the future, but the Son was the only One in the days of His Manhood on earth who also possessed life that stretched back into the past eternity. In this He was one with the Father. ([What the Bible Teaches - John](#))

**Warren Wiersbe** - The grave could not hold Him because He is "the Prince of Life" (Acts 2:24; Acts 3:15). Jesus laid down His life and then took it up again (John 10:17-18). Because He has **life in Himself**, He can share that life with all who will trust Him.

## QUESTION - [What is the aseity of God?](#)

**ANSWER** - The aseity of God is His attribute of independent self-existence. God is the uncaused Cause, the [uncreated Creator](#). He is the source of all things, the One who originated everything and who sustains everything that exists. The aseity of God means that He is the One in whom all other things find their source, existence, and continuance. He is the ever-present Power that sustains all life. There is no other source of life and none other like Him: "For I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like Me" ([Isaiah 46:9](#)).

The aseity of God is expressed in Exodus 3:14. When Moses asked the Lord about His name, God replied, "I AM WHO I AM." God is the eternally self-existent Being who always was and always will be. The aseity of God is related to His complete independence. God has no need. He is complete in and of Himself and always has been. God did not create man because He was lonely or because He needed to create. He is and always has been complete and self-sufficient in and of Himself.

God's name I AM embodies the concept of God's eternity and immutability, both of which are linked to His aseity. God is eternal ([Psalm 90:2](#)). He did not have a beginning. He has always been. God is unchangeable ([Malachi 3:6](#); [James 1:17](#)), always the same yesterday, today, and forever. He will be what He is forever. All of God's attributes—His love, power, wisdom, etc.—are eternal and unchanging. They are as they have always been and will never be any different.

God's aseity assures us that His autonomy is absolute. He alone decides what to do, and nothing can ever thwart His purpose to keep His promises. What He promises to do, He will do. What He predicts will come to pass. When God says, "My purpose will stand, and I will do all that I please" ([Isaiah 46:10](#)), He is emphasizing His aseity and [sovereignty](#).

Jesus Christ, being God in flesh, shares the aseity of God with the Father. Jesus claimed the name [I AM](#) for Himself ([John 8:58](#); [18:6](#)). Speaking of Jesus, Paul declares, "In him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through him and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together" ([Colossians 1:16–17](#)). Jesus is not a created being. He came to earth as God in flesh and after His resurrection ascended back into heaven to take His rightful place as Creator of the universe. In the Old Testament, God declared to the Israelites that He is "the First and the Last" ([Isaiah 44:6b](#)). Jesus made the same declaration about Himself in [Revelation 1:17](#).

Because of the aseity of God, we can depend upon Him as the independent One who is able to deliver, protect, and keep those who trust in Him. Those whom God has purposed for salvation will come to Christ, and nothing can hinder them: "All those the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never drive away" ([John 6:37](#)). If we understand the biblical doctrine of the aseity of God, we will be kept from the error of thinking that God is finite, that He grows weary, or that He will ever be insufficient to meet our needs (see [Psalm 23:1](#)). [GotQuestions.org](#)

### **John 5:27 and He gave Him authority to execute judgment, because He is the Son of Man.**

BGT John 5:27 κα ξουσ αν δωκεν α τ κρ σιν ποιε ν, τι υ ς νθρ που στ ν.

KJV John 5:27 And hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man.

NET John 5:27 and he has granted the Son authority to execute judgment, because he is the Son of Man.

CSB John 5:27 And He has granted Him the right to pass judgment, because He is the Son of Man.

ESV John 5:27 And he has given him authority to execute judgment, because he is the Son of Man.

NIV John 5:27 And he has given him authority to judge because he is the Son of Man.

NLT John 5:27 And he has given him authority to judge everyone because he is the Son of Man.

NRS John 5:27 and he has given him authority to execute judgment, because he is the Son of Man.

NJB John 5:27 and, because he is the Son of man, has granted him power to give judgement.

NAB John 5:27 And he gave him power to exercise judgment, because he is the Son of Man.

YLT John 5:27 and authority He gave him also to do judgment, because he is Son of Man.

- **because:** [Da 7:13-14](#) [Php 2:7-11](#) [Heb 2:7-9](#)
- [John 5 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## Related Passages:

Daniel 7:13-14 "I kept looking in the night visions, And behold, with the clouds of heaven One like a **Son of Man** was coming, And He came up to the Ancient of Days And was presented before Him. 14 "And to Him was **given dominion** (= the power or right of governing and controlling; sovereign authority), 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.

## THE SON'S AUTHORITY TO JUDGE THE WORLD

**and** (kai) - A crucial conjunction. Not only did the Father give the Son to **have life in Himself**, He also gave him **authority**.

**He gave Him authority** ([exousia](#)) to **execute** ([poieo](#) - present tense - continually execute) **judgment** ([krisis](#)) - NLT paraphrases it correctly "To judge everyone!" The Father gave the Son the **authority** ([exousia](#)) which in simple terms means the "right and the might" to judge every person ever born. Judgment describes the process of making a separation based on investigation. The Jewish leaders knew exactly what Jesus claimed and it shut their mouth (for the time being)!

The separation inherent in **judgment** makes one think of Psalm 1:4-6+ where the psalmist explains that "The wicked are not so (LIKE THE GODLY), but they are like chaff (CONTRAST THE WELL-WATERED TREE IN Ps 1:3!) which the wind drives away (AKA "SEPARATES" cf Rev 21:8+, Rev 22:14-15+). Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment (THEY WILL NOT REMAIN STANDING OR ENDURE BUT BE SEPARATED! cf Rev 20:11-15+), nor sinners in the assembly of the righteous. For the LORD knows the way of the righteous, But the way of the wicked will perish.

**Because** (term of explanation) **He is the Son of Man**- In John 5:25 Jesus described Himself as the Son of God, and here (only time in John 5) as the **Son of Man**. Jesus receives authority from the Father by virtue of the fact that He is God's Son. Why would Jesus change His self-designation to **Son of Man**? One reason is **Son of Man** would be a direct reference to Da 7:13, a passage which the Jews interpreted as a reference to the Messiah!

**MacDonald on Son of Man** - He came into this world as a **Man**, lived here among men, and died on the cross as a Substitute for men and women. He was rejected and crucified when He came into the world as a **Man**. (Borrow [Believer's Bible Commentary](#))

**Son of Man is frequent in the Gospels the Gospels**- Matt. 8:20; Matt. 9:6; Matt. 10:23; Matt. 11:19; Matt. 12:8; Matt. 12:32; Matt. 12:40; Matt. 13:37; Matt. 13:41; Matt. 16:13; Matt. 16:27; Matt. 16:28; Matt. 17:9; Matt. 17:12; Matt. 17:22; Matt. 18:11; Matt. 19:28; Matt. 20:18; Matt. 20:28; Matt. 24:27; Matt. 24:30; Matt. 24:37; Matt. 24:39; Matt. 24:44; Matt. 25:31; Matt. 26:2; Matt. 26:24; Matt. 26:45; Matt. 26:64; Mk. 2:10; Mk. 2:28; Mk. 8:31; Mk. 8:38; Mk. 9:9; Mk. 9:12; Mk. 9:31; Mk. 10:33; Mk. 10:45; Mk. 13:26; Mk. 14:21; Mk. 14:41; Mk. 14:62; Lk. 5:24; Lk. 6:5; Lk. 6:22; Lk. 7:34; Lk. 9:22; Lk. 9:26; Lk. 9:44; Lk. 9:56; Lk. 9:58; Lk. 11:30; Lk. 12:8; Lk. 12:10; Lk. 12:40; Lk. 17:22; Lk. 17:24; Lk. 17:26; Lk. 17:30; Lk. 18:8; Lk. 18:31; Lk. 19:10; Lk. 21:27; Lk. 21:36; Lk. 22:22; Lk. 22:48; Lk. 22:69; Lk. 24:7; Jn. 1:51; Jn. 3:13; Jn. 3:14; Jn. 5:27; Jn. 6:27; Jn. 6:53; Jn. 6:62; Jn. 8:28; Jn. 9:35; Jn. 12:23; Jn. 12:34; Jn. 13:31; Acts 7:56; Heb. 2:6; Rev. 1:13; Rev. 14:14

[Life Application Study Bible](#) ([borrow](#)) has an interesting note - The Old Testament mentioned three signs of the coming Messiah. In this chapter, John shows that Jesus has fulfilled all three signs. **Authority to judge** is given to him as the **Son of Man** (cf. Jn 5:27 with Daniel 7:13, 14). **The lame and sick are healed** (cf. Jn 5:20, 21 with Isaiah 35:6; Jeremiah 31:8, 9). **The dead are raised to life** (cf. Jn 5:21, 28 with Deut 32:39; 1Sa 2:6; 2Ki 5:7).

[Complete Biblical Library](#) also has an interesting allusion to the Old Testament - The **Son of Man**, according to Daniel 7:13, is the One who will dispense the final judgment at the end of the world. Jesus explicitly draws on Daniel 7:13 in Mark 14:62, Matthew 26:64, and Luke 22:69.

**John MacArthur on Son of Man** - As with the authority to give life, the Father also gave the incarnate and submissive Son the authority to execute judgment. Christ received that authority because He is the Son of Man. As God in human flesh, a man "who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin" (Heb. 4:15), Jesus is uniquely qualified to be mankind's judge. The phrase Son of Man, Jesus' favorite designation of Himself, derives from Daniel's messianic description of the Son of Man as the one who "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" (Dan. 7:14). Since He is the God-man who entered fully into human life, experience, and temptation (Heb. 2:14-18; 4:14-16), Jesus can be the ultimate judge of all mankind.

**A T Robertson** on **the Son of Man** - Rather, "because He is a Son of man" (note absence of articles and so not as the Messiah), because the judge of men must partake of human nature himself (Westcott). ([Word Pictures of the New Testament](#))

**Bob Utley** - The reason that Jesus is able ([exousia](#), has authority, cf. John 10:18; 17:2; 19:11) to judge rightly is because He is fully God but also fully man. This answers the question of the Jewish leadership from John 2:18. It was the central question! There is no DEFINITE ARTICLE with the phrase "Son of Man" (cf. Ezek. 2:1 and Ps. 8:4). He fully knows us (cf. Heb. 4:15); He fully knows God (cf. John 1:18; 5:30). It is surprising that in a context where Jesus calls Himself "the son" (cf. John 5:19 [twice], 20,21,22,23 [twice], 25,26) that in John 5:27 the title "son of man" (but without the usual DEFINITE ARTICLE) is used. However, the same switch is in John 3:13,14 vs. John 3:16,17,18,35,36, John 6:27,53 vs. John 6:40 and John 8:28 vs. John 8:35,36. Jesus used both titles for Himself interchangeably. See [SPECIAL TOPIC: SON OF MAN](#)

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**Authority** (1849) [exousia](#) from **éxesti** = it is permitted, it is lawful) means the power to do something and was a technical term used in the law courts, of a legal right. "[Authority](#) or right is the dominant meaning (of exousia) in the New Testament." (Vincent) **Exousía** refers to delegated [authority](#) and combines the idea of the "right and the might", these attributes having been granted to someone. **Exousia** is an important term in the Gospels. Many conflicts in Jesus' life and ministry turn on debates about authority or the idea that Jesus taught with an unparalleled authority (Mt 7:29; 8:9; 9:6, 8; 21:23-27; 28:18; Mk 1:22, 27; 2:10; 3:15; 11:28-33; Lk 4:32, 36; 5:24; 7:8; 20:2-8).

**Exousia in John's Gospel** - Jn. 1:12; Jn. 5:27; Jn. 10:18; Jn. 17:2; Jn. 19:10; Jn. 19:11

**W E Vine** explains that **exousía** evolved "from the meaning of "leave or permission" or "liberty of doing as one pleases" and passed to that of "the ability or strength with which one is endued," then to that of the "power of authority," the right to exercise power or "the power of rule or government," the power of one whose will and commands must be obeyed by others. ([Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary](#))

**Wuest** writes that **exousía** means literally "to be out and was used of that authority which a person has which is delegated to him from someone else. The person delegating the authority is in a sense out of himself and acting in the person to whom he has delegated the authority. Thus, the word means "delegated authority." The word means also "the power of authority and of right." It was used in legal practice of delegated authority. Here it is used of our Lord as having that authority in Himself, not derived from others. The rabbis quoted from other rabbis and felt themselves to be expounders of tradition. The Messiah struck a new note here, and the people were quick to recognize it. They saw that here was a Teacher who spoke on His own **authority**." ([Wuest Word Studies - Eerdmann Publishing Company Volume 1, Volume 2, Volume 3](#) - used [by permission](#))

**John 5:28 "Do not marvel at this; for an hour is coming, in which all who are in the tombs will hear His voice,**

BGT John 5:28 μ θαυμ ζετε το το, τι ρχεται ρα ν πι ντες ο ν το ς μνημε οις κο σουσιν τ ς φων ς α το

KJV John 5:28 Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice,

NET John 5:28 "Do not be amazed at this, because a time is coming when all who are in the tombs will hear his voice

CSB John 5:28 Do not be amazed at this, because a time is coming when all who are in the graves will hear His voice

ESV John 5:28 Do not marvel at this, for an hour is coming when all who are in the tombs will hear his voice

NIV John 5:28 "Do not be amazed at this, for a time is coming when all who are in their graves will hear his voice

NLT John 5:28 Don't be so surprised! Indeed, the time is coming when all the dead in their graves will hear the voice of God's Son,

NRS John 5:28 Do not be astonished at this; for the hour is coming when all who are in their graves will hear his voice

NJB John 5:28 Do not be surprised at this, for the hour is coming when the dead will leave their graves at the sound of his voice:

NAB John 5:28 Do not be amazed at this, because the hour is coming in which all who are in the tombs will



hear his voice

YLT John 5:28 'Wonder not at this, because there doth come an hour in which all those in the tombs shall hear his voice,

- **Marvel:** Jn 5:20 3:7 Ac 3:12
- **for:** Jn 6:39,40 11:25 Job 19:25,26 Isa 26:19 Eze 37:1-10 Ho 13:14 1Co 15:22,42-54 Php 3:21 1Th 4:14-17 Rev 20:12
- [John 5 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## **STOP BEING SO SURPRISED ONE DAY ALL WILL HEAR HIS VOICE**

**Do not marvel** ([thaumazo](#)) **at this** - What is **this**? **This** refers to the fact that the Father has made the Son of Man the executor of judgment on every man. **Do not marvel** ([thaumazo](#)) is in the [present imperative with a negative](#) calling for His hearers to stop marveling or being so surprised (NLT) at His claims of power over life (Jn 5:26) and judgment (Jn 5:27) for He will now claim He has the power to quicken those dead in the grave which would shock them even more! Keep in mind the revelation Jesus is giving in this incredible discourse is unlike anything these religious hypocrites have ever heard! So they were astonished, even if with a sense of indignation, at Jesus' [chutzpah](#) to make such incredible claims!

**For** - Term of explanation. What is Jesus explaining?

**An hour is coming, in which all who are in the tombs**([mnemeion](#)) **will hear His voice** - Whose **voice** will they **hear**? The Son of Man (Jn 5:27). And who **will hear**? **All**, which signifies that all mankind, saved or unsaved will **hear** this call and **all** will obey. Note these are dead bodies which will hear and obey because Jesus' Word carries creative power and it cannot be refused. Sadly the unsaved did not **hear** His call to believe (Jn 5:24, 25) during their life, but now will hear His call and must obey His call to arise from the tomb! Note that Jesus is not speaking here of the spiritual resurrection of John 5:25 but is referring to a future physical resurrection of all the dead. [See the table above](#) comparing the spiritual with the physical resurrection.

Think for a moment what Jesus a Man has just said to the Jewish leaders! He is saying that even physical bodies lying in the grave would one day **hear His voice**. If they were already amazed by the preceding claims, this claim would strike them as even more incredible! How could dead people hear? The Jewish audience would have had three choices concerning Jesus ([alluded to earlier](#)) - (1) He was out of His mind, a raving lunatic, (2) He was lying and trying to foist one over on them or (3) He truly was (is) God, the one thing that they clearly did not want to believe!

**A T Robertson on in the tombs** - [Taphos](#) (grave) presents the notion of burial (thaptō, to bury) as in Matthew 23:27, mnēmeion (from mnaomai, mimnēskō, to remind) is a memorial (sepulchre as a monument). Jesus claims not only the power of life (spiritual) and of judgement, but of power to quicken the actual dead at the Last Day. They will hear his voice and come out (ekporeusontai, future middle indicative of ekporeuomai). ([Word Pictures of the New Testament](#))

[The Believer's Study Bible](#) - His more general statement (REGARDING RESURRECTION) is given greater specificity elsewhere in Scripture, as applied to the following occasions: (1) when Christ comes for His church (cf. 1Th 4:13-18); (2) the resurrection of tribulation saints at the return of Christ (Rev 20:4-5+); and (3) the final resurrection of the wicked at the close of the Millennium, at the [Great White Throne](#) (Rev. 20:11-15+)

**John MacArthur** - The resurrection of all who are in the tombs is still future. At that time, the souls of the righteous dead, now in heaven with the Lord (2 Cor. 5:6-8), and of the wicked dead, now in torment in Hades (Luke 16:22-23), will be given resurrected bodies fit for eternity. Some argue from this text that the resurrection of both the righteous and unrighteous takes place at the same time. But while Jesus spoke here of the resurrection in general, He did not describe one general resurrection. On the contrary, in verse 29 He clearly distinguished between the resurrection of life and the resurrection of judgment. He made that same distinction in Luke 14:14, where He spoke of the resurrection of the righteous, implying that it is a distinct event. Revelation 20:4-6 also mentions two resurrections: the first consists of the righteous dead before the Millennium, and the second of the unrighteous dead for the [Great White Throne](#) judgment at the end of the Millennium. The Bible teaches that the dead are raised in a specific sequence, not all at once: *For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all will be made alive. But each in his own order: Christ the first fruits, after that those who are Christ's at His coming, then comes the end, when He hands over the kingdom to the God and Father, when He has abolished all rule and all authority and power.* (1 Cor. 15:22-24+) The adjective tagma ("order" or "turn") stresses that the dead are raised at different times: "Christ the first fruits," "those who are Christ's at His coming," and the rest at "the end"—the consummation of all things when the wicked (the only ones not already mentioned) will be resurrected. The adjectives epeita ("after that") and eita ("then") almost always describe chronological (as opposed to logical) sequences of events. Those who belong to Christ will be raised in connection with His coming. The believers of the church age (from Pentecost to the Rapture) will be raised at the Rapture (1 Thess. 4:16+), and the Old Testament saints, along with those saved during the Tribulation, at the end of the Tribulation (Rev.

20:4+; cf. Dan. 12:2+). Although Scripture does not explicitly mention them, believers who die during the Millennium will presumably receive their resurrection bodies immediately. (See [John 1-11 MacArthur New Testament Commentary](#))

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**Tombs** (3419) **mnemeion** from **mneme** = memory, remembrance) literally means a memorial and then a monument to commemorate the dead (Mt 23:29), but most often referred to a tomb, grave or sepulcher. Most uses refer to the tomb in which Jesus' dead body was laid - Mt 27:60; Mt 28:8; Mk 15:46; 16:2, 3, 5, 8; Lk 23:55; 24:1, 2, 9, 12, 22, 24; John 19:42; 20:1-4, 6, 8, 11 Acts 13:29. The first NT use describes "demon-possessed met Him as they were coming out of the tombs" (Mt 8:28), the second Jesus' rebuke of the Jewish religious leaders who were "hypocrites" building "the tombs of the prophets and adorn the monuments of the righteous" who they would have willingly murdered.(Mt 23:29, 30), the third describes the tombs opened and dead rising when Jesus died (Mt 27:52, 53), the fourth describes Jesus' burial tomb (Mt 27:60).

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**ILLUSTRATION** - In a cemetery in Hanover, Germany, is a grave on which were placed huge slabs of granite and marble cemented together and fastened with heavy steel clasps. It belongs to a woman who did not believe in the resurrection of the dead. Yet strangely, she directed in her will that her grave be made so secure that if there were a resurrection, it could not reach her. On the marker were inscribed these words: "This burial place must never be opened." In time, a seed, covered over by the stones, began to grow. Slowly it pushed its way through the soil and out from beneath them. As the trunk enlarged, the great slabs were gradually shifted so that the steel clasps were wrenched from their sockets. A tiny seed had become a tree that had pushed aside the stones. The dynamic life force contained in that little seed is a faint reflection of the tremendous power of God's creative word that someday will call to life the bodies of all who are in their graves. He will also bring back every person drowned at sea, cremated, or destroyed in some other way. This is no problem to the One who made something out of nothing when He spoke the universe into existence. Unbelief cannot deter the resurrection, but faith in the risen Christ opens the door to blessings that His resurrection guarantees—a glorious new spiritual body and a home in heaven. In new bodies we will be reunited with saved loved ones to live with Jesus throughout all eternity. Jesus promises to resurrect us and give us a new, glorified body. (Rod Mattoon - [Treasures from John.](#))

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## **Tombstone Irony**

The hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear His voice. — John 5:28

Today's Scripture: John 5:24-29

Most people who don't believe in God deny the reality of life after death. They say the grave ends all, and they feel no need to plan for eternity.

Some time ago an unbeliever wanted to make this point, so he had these words inscribed on his tombstone:

All Dressed Up  
And No Place To Go

How ironic! It's true that we put people in their best clothes for the coffin, or we may even purchase new ones. But the Lord Jesus made it undeniably clear that at death we do have "someplace to go" (Jn. 5:25-29).

When believers die, their bodies are put in the ground but their souls go to be with the Lord (2 Cor. 5:8). When Christ returns, their bodies will be resurrected and reunited with their souls, and they will "always be with the Lord" in heaven (1 Th. 4:17).

Unbelievers will also be resurrected one day, but it will be to stand before Christ in judgment. Because their names are not found in the Book of Life, they will be sent to what the Bible calls the "lake of fire" (Rev. 20:11-15). There they will endure "everlasting punishment" (Mt. 25:46).

All dressed up and no place to go? Wrong! We are destined for heaven or hell, depending on whether or not we believe in Christ as our Savior. By: David C. Egner ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

O God, You'd have us ponder this,  
One truth You'd have us see:  
It's in this life we chart our course  
For all eternity.  
—DJD

Death is not a dead end but a fork in the road.

**John 5:29 and will come forth; those who did the good deeds to a resurrection of life, those who committed the evil deeds to a resurrection of judgment.**

BGT John 5:29 κα κπορε σονται ο τ γαθ ποι σαντες ες ν στασιν ζω ς, ο δ τ φα λα πρ ξαντες ες ν στασιν κρ σεως.

KJV John 5:29 And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.

NET John 5:29 and will come out-- the ones who have done what is good to the resurrection resulting in life, and the ones who have done what is evil to the resurrection resulting in condemnation.

CSB John 5:29 and come out-- those who have done good things, to the resurrection of life, but those who have done wicked things, to the resurrection of judgment.

ESV John 5:29 and come out, those who have done good to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil to the resurrection of judgment.

NIV John 5:29 and come out--those who have done good will rise to live, and those who have done evil will rise to be condemned.

NLT John 5:29 and they will rise again. Those who have done good will rise to experience eternal life, and those who have continued in evil will rise to experience judgment.

NRS John 5:29 and will come out-- those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation.

NJB John 5:29 those who did good will come forth to life; and those who did evil will come forth to judgement.

NAB John 5:29 and will come out, those who have done good deeds to the resurrection of life, but those who have done wicked deeds to the resurrection of condemnation.

YLT John 5:29 and they shall come forth; those who did the good things to a rising again of life, and those who practised the evil things to a rising again of judgment.

- **come:** Da 12:2-3 Mt 25:31-46 Ac 24:15
- **did the good:** Lu 14:14 Ro 2:6-10 Ga 6:8-10 1Ti 6:18 Heb 13:16 1Pe 3:11
- [John 5 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passages:

Luke 14:14+ But when you give a reception, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind, and you will be blessed, since they do not have the means to repay you; for **you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous.**"

Daniel 12:2-3+ Many of those who sleep in the dust of the ground will awake, these to everlasting life, but the others to disgrace and everlasting contempt. 3 "Those who have insight will shine brightly like the brightness of the expanse of heaven, and those who lead the many to righteousness, like the stars forever and ever.

## RESURRECTION OF THE LIVING AND THE DEAD

**And will come forth** ([ekporeuomai](#)) - **Will come forth** = will be resurrected. All **will come forth** (from the dead - [see table](#)), believers and unbelievers alike, but this coming forth will not be at the same time or for the same type of judgment for these two groups. Believers will come forth for rewards whereas unbelievers will come forth for condemnation and eternal punishment. This dramatic contrast is described by Paul in Romans 2:6-10

(GOD) Who WILL RENDER TO **EACH PERSON** (BELIEVERS AND NON-BELIEVERS) ACCORDING TO HIS DEEDS: 7 to those who by perseverance in doing good seek for glory and honor and immortality, eternal life (FATE OF BELIEVERS); 8 **BUT** to those who are selfishly ambitious and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, wrath and indignation (FATE OF UNBELIEVERS). 9 There will be tribulation and distress for

every soul of man who does evil, of the Jew first and also of the Greek, 10 **BUT** glory and honor and peace to everyone who does good, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. (See Commentary)

**Homer Kent** - This passage has been used to teach a general resurrection of all men at the same time, it actually states only the fact that all will be raised, without specifying whether there may be various stages by which resurrection will occur. (Borrow [Light in the darkness : studies in the Gospel of John](#))

**Those who did (poieo) the good deeds to a resurrection (anastasis) of life:** **Life** here refers to eternal life. This if referred to as the first resurrection, will include all believers (which occurs in several stages - see video on [First and Second Resurrection](#)), and the resurrection of judgment (the "second" resurrection) will involve unbelievers at the end of the Millennium (Rev. 20:11-15+).

Notice they are to be judged on deeds which results in a separation of wheat and chaff (so to speak). It is by what they **did** (past tense). In other words they will be judged on the deeds they committed. Now pause for a moment! Even saved sinners do not continually, perfectly do **good deeds!** The critical point to remember about one's deeds is their general **direction** and not absolute **perfection**. A saved person will "*blow it*" from time to time just like an unsaved person, but because the saved person possesses the internal Power of the Holy Spirit, the general direction of their thoughts, words and deeds will be "*heavenward*" and not "*hell-ward*." A corollary thought is if you say you are a believer, your behavior ought to show it. To say it another way, a saved person will manifest progressive sanctification, growing more like Christ over time, even though they may experience moments (sometimes even seasons) of un-Christ-like behavior ("*two steps forward, one step back*")! Praise God for His infinite mercy, forgiveness and grace to keep us on the straight and narrow path of holiness! Indeed as Paul says "Faithful is He who calls you, and He also will bring it to pass." (1Th 5:24, cf Php 1:6)

**Good deeds** are deeds with an "o" knocked out! In other words they are "God deeds," deeds initiated and energized by the Spirit of God and glorifying to the Father. Spiritually dead people hear (Gospel), believe and receive life. The fruit of this new life is good deeds! We see that pattern in Ephesians 2:8-9+ (believe and be saved) and Ephesians 2:10+ (good works prepared for believers). Stated another way, good deeds are evidence of salvation, but do not result in salvation (that is only by grace through faith). Good works are the fruit of salvation, not the cause. See more on [Good Deeds](#).

Jesus is **NOT** teaching works based salvation which this verse taken out of context might suggest. This issue is discussed at length in 3 notes below ([GA](#), [WK](#), [NG](#))

**Those who committed (prasso) the evil deeds to a resurrection (anastasis) of judgment (krisis) - Committed (prasso)** describes **evil deeds** as their practice, their lifestyle, or as discussed above, their direction ("*hell-ward*")! **Resurrection of judgment** could be read "a resurrection resulting in judgment" which in turn is synonymous with the Great White Throne judgment (Rev 20:11-15+), the final judgment of all unbelievers of all ages (cf Mt 10:15; Mt 11:22, 24; Mt 12:36, 41, 42; Lk 10:14; Jn 12:48; Acts 17:31; Acts 24:25; Ro 2:5, 16; 2Pe 2:9; 3:7; Jude 6). Believers of course will in a sense experience a *resurrection of judgment*, but their judgment will be at a different time (see [TIMELINE BELOW](#)) and for a different purpose (not for sin but for rewards) (2Co 5:10+).

**Swindoll on judgment** - The literal meaning is "to sift and separate" as one does in order to isolate the components of a mixture. The primary use is metaphorical in the sense of "sifting through the details to arrive at a conclusion." In terms of a person, the idea is to sift the details of his or her life in order to examine them and render a decision about his or her character. *krisis*, "judgment," is the result of this sifting. (Borrow [Insights on John](#))

This same prophecy was given in Daniel 12:2-3+

"Many of those who sleep in the dust of the ground will awake, these to everlasting life (BELIEVERS IN JESUS - "RESURRECTION OF THE RIGHTEOUS" - Lk 14:4), but the others to disgrace and everlasting contempt (REJECTORS OF JESUS). "Those who have insight will shine brightly like the brightness of the expanse of heaven, and those who lead the many to righteousness, like the stars forever and ever."

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Comparison of John 5:24 & Jn 5:28-29  
(Source Swindoll's Insights on John)

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**Come forth (1607) ekporeuomai** from **ek** = out + **poreuomai** = come, go) to make to go forth, to go forth. Friberg - (1) literally; (a) absolutely go from or out of a place, depart from (Mk 6.11); go out (Acts 9.28); (b) of the dead coming out of tombs emerge, come forth (Jn 5.29); (c) of demons come out ( Mt 17.21); (d) of a journey set out (Mk 10.17); (2) figuratively; (a) of words or thoughts proceed from, go or come out of the mouth, i.e. be spoken (Mt 15.11); (b) of a report spread abroad, tell everywhere (Lk 4.37); (c) of the Spirit proceed from (Jn 15.26); (d) of water flow out, stream forth (Rev 22.1) (Borrow [Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament](#))

**Did (4160) poieo** occurs 568 times, primarily in the Gospels and in a wide variety of contexts, which makes it difficult to do a simple

word study. **BDAG** says **poieo** is "a **multivalent** term (possessing many meanings), often without pointed semantic (relating to meaning in language) significance, used in reference to a broad range of activity involving such matters as bringing something into being, bringing something to pass, or simply interacting in some way with a variety of entities." (**BDAG**) **Poieo** is primarily translated with the idea of to **DO** (to bring to pass, to carry out, to bring about, to accomplish), to **MAKE** (to construct or fashion something out of existing material) to **PERFORM**. [Click](#) for more in depth discussion.

**Committed** (practiced) (4238) **prasso** means doing something as a regular practice or as a routine habit, and is distinguished from **poieo** which means "to do" which focuses more on the end/achievement of the action. In contrast **prasso** focuses on the process or habitual effort to arrive at the end/achievement, and thus refers more to the course of conduct. The predominant idea conveyed by **prasso** in its NT uses is to bring about or accomplish an objective through some activity (Ro 1:32, 2:3, Ac 5:35, 26:20, 2Co 5:10, etc). **Prassō** focuses on the activity (continued process) that brings the needed end.

**Vine** compares **poieo** and **prasso** noting that "**prasso** signifies to practise, though this is not always to be pressed. The Apostle John, in his Epistles, uses the continuous tenses ([present tense](#)) of **poieō**, to indicate a practice, the habit of doing something, e.g., 1Jn 3:4 (cp **poieo** in 1 Jn 3:8, 9 where the sense of practising is the meaning). John uses **prasso** twice in the Gospel, Jn 3:20 and Jn 5:29. The Apostle Paul uses **prasso** in the sense of practising, and the R.V. so renders the word in Ro 1:32; 2:2...Generally speaking, in Paul's Epistles **poieō** denotes an action complete in itself, while **prassō** denotes a habit. The difference is seen in Ro 1:32. Again, **poieō** stresses the accomplishment, e.g., "perform," in Ro 4:21; **prassō** stresses the process leading to the accomplishment, e.g., "doer," in Ro 2:25. In Ro 2:3 he who **does**, **poieō**, the things mentioned, is warned against judging those who **practise** them, **prassō**. The distinction in John 3:20, 21 is noticeable: "Every one that does (**prassō**, practises) ill ... he that does (**poieō**) the truth," While we cannot draw the regular distinction, that **prassō** speaks of doing evil things, and **poieō** of doing good things, yet very often "where the words assume an ethical tinge, there is a tendency to use the verbs with this distinction" (Trench, Syn., § xcvi). ([Vine's Expository Dictionary of Old Testament and New Testament Words](#))

**Resurrection** (386) **anastasis** from **ana** = up, again + **histemi** = to cause to stand) literally means "to stand again" or "to cause to stand again" and most NT uses refer to a physical body rising from the dead or coming back to life after having once died. The **resurrection** is distinguished from belief in reincarnation, which usually involves a series of rebirths from which the soul may seek release. Resurrection has primary reference to the body. The resurrection is the central, defining doctrine and claim of the gospel for as Paul wrote "if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is vain, your faith also is vain." (1Cor 15:14)

#### Related Resources on resurrection

- [Why is the resurrection of Jesus Christ important?](#)
- [Why does it matter that Jesus rose from the dead?](#)
- [Is the resurrection of Jesus Christ true?](#)
- [When will the Resurrection take place?](#)
- [What is the first resurrection? What is the second resurrection?](#)
- [What is more important, the death of Christ or His resurrection?](#)
- [What did Jesus mean when He said, "I am the Resurrection and the Life" \(John 11:25\)?](#)
- [Where do the Hebrew Scriptures prophesy the death and resurrection of the Messiah?](#)
- [Why should I believe in Christ's resurrection?](#)
- [What does it mean that Jesus rose "again"?](#)
- [Torrey's Topic - Resurrection of Christ](#)

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Study the schematic below and note that there are two general categories of resurrections, the First resurrection in stages for believers and the second resurrection as a single event for unbelievers.

### **THE TWO RESURRECTIONS**



(3) FIRST  
 Resurrection  
 The Two  
 Witnesses Saints from FIRST Resurrection  
 Raised at Mid- Experience the Millennium  
 Tribulation  
 ||  
 V



**\*Note:** The word "Tribulation" is never specifically used in Scripture to designate the last 7 years, Daniel's 70th week, but will be used in these notes because the term is so firmly entrenched in Christian jargon. Last 3.5 years is designated the Great Tribulation.

**EXPLANATORY NOTES** ([see also video on first and second resurrections](#)): The **First Resurrection** concerns only believers and is composed of several distinct "stages" at different times. Note that all believers (not just saints martyred during the Great Tribulation) will reign with Christ in His Millennial Kingdom. The **Second Resurrection** deals only with unbelievers and occurs in a single "stage" or as a one time event. Both the First and Second Resurrections refer to **physical** or **bodily resurrection**, not spiritual resurrection.

**(1) The prototype resurrection forming the basis of the First Resurrection** - Christ the first fruits of all subsequent resurrections of believers (1Co 15:20+)

**(2) The Second "stage" of the First Resurrection** - Believers who have died during the Church Age will be resurrected at the time the Lord returns to Rapture His Bride, the Church. (1 Th 4:13-18+, 1Co 15:50-53+, cp Jn 14:3)

**(3) The Third "stage" of the First Resurrection** - The two witnesses who are killed in Revelation 11 are raised and then went up to heaven (Rev 11:11, 12+)

**(4a) The Fourth "stage" of the First Resurrection** - After the Great Tribulation, believers who have been martyred will be resurrected to immortality (See notes regarding those who come out of Great Tribulation, some of which are undoubtedly martyred - Rev 7:9+; Rev 7:14+; see notes regarding saints martyred during the Great Tribulation some - Rev 20:4-6+)

**(4b) The Fourth "stage" of the First Resurrection** - After the time of Jacob's Distress or Trouble (Jer 30:7+ = the Great Tribulation), the Old Testament saints will also be resurrected (see OT descriptions of resurrection - Daniel 12:1, 2, 13+, Isaiah 26:19, Job 19:26)

What Biblical basis is there for placing the resurrection of OT saints at the end of the Great Tribulation, the time of Jacob's distress? Jeremiah gives us a clue writing...

'Alas! for that day (not a literal day but a 3.5 year period that corresponds to the Great Tribulation) is great, there is none like it; and it is the time of Jacob's distress (at which time there is a horrible time of persecution of Jews by the Satanically inspired Antichrist, a "Jewish holocaust" the likes of which the world has never seen, but one that will be cut short by the return of the Messiah), But he (Israel, the believing remnant) will be saved from it. And it shall come about on that day (what day? the day of the Lord's return - see description beginning in Rev 19:11+), declares the LORD of hosts, 'that I will break his yoke from off their neck, and will tear off their bonds; and strangers shall no longer make them their slaves. (To reiterate,

this day corresponds to the return of the Lord, who defeats the Antichrist and all Gentile powers arrayed against God, His saints and Israel) But **they** (this refers to those Jews who come to saving faith in the time of Jacob's distress - see Ro 11:25, 26, 27+) shall serve the LORD their God, and **David their king**, whom I **will raise up** for them. (Jeremiah 30:7-9+)

**Comment:** Note that these passages {also Ezekiel 37:24} indicate that David himself will be resurrected and will actually reign over the earthly Israel during the millennial age. David's resurrection follows the defeat of the Gentiles at the end of the Great Tribulation which supports the premise that this period is the time when OT saints are resurrected.

**(5) The Second Resurrection** - After the 1000 year Millennial Kingdom all of the unbelieving dead will be resurrected to stand before the [Great White Throne](#) judgment and since their names are not found written in the book of life, they will be cast into the Lake of fire, which constitutes the Second Death, eternal separation away from the glory of God. (Rev 20:11-15+)

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### Gleason Archer - [New International Encyclopedia of Bible Difficulties](#) - How can John 5:28–29 be reconciled with the gospel of grace?

John 5:28–29 reads: “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 good will rise to live, and those who have done evil will rise to be condemned” (NIV). Such a pronouncement as this, when taken out of context, might seem to establish the principle that men are saved by good works, by deeds of the law, rather than by grace through faith. But taken in its own context, it becomes clear that Jesus did not intend to preach salvation through good works, but only to furnish a valid criterion for saving faith. In v.24 of the same passage, He had affirmed, “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” (NIV). The requirement for salvation involves careful attention to Christ's word and faith in God, who sent His Son to save sinners from death.

In order to grasp what Jesus meant here by doing good and doing evil, we must remember that it is God's viewpoint rather than man's that finally determines what is good and what is evil. Whatever man does in his own interest or for his own credit or glory is devoid of true goodness in God's eyes, no matter how helpful or admirable it may seem to the human observer. “The carnal mind is enmity against God, for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God” (Rom. 8:7–8). From God's standpoint, then, no unconverted person is capable of performing a good work. It is only as the indwelling Spirit of Christ takes control of the heart, head, and hand of the born-again believer that a truly good work is accomplished. And it is good only because God is the one who performs it, working through a yielded human instrument (Rom. 6:12–14).

Yet it should be observed that the fruit of genuine faith is good works, not merit-earning good works, of course, but Christ-expressing and Christ-glorifying good works. As the Epistle of James makes clear, a counterfeit faith is of no value before God; but a true faith will be a working faith. “Faith, if it has no works, is dead, being by itself. But someone may well say, `You have faith, and I have works; show me your faith without the works, and I will show you my faith by my works” (James 2:17–18, NASB).

This principle pervades Christ's teaching throughout the Gospels. In Matthew 7 the Sermon on the Mount closes with a contrast between the foolish man who heard Christ's teaching but failed to carry it out and the wise man who faithfully obeyed the teaching of his Lord. In the previous paragraph Jesus described the sorry plight of those at the final judgment who would come before Him and plead their own good works, even though ostensibly performed in Christ's name and service, as a ground for admission to heaven. Because they have not truly done “the will of My Father who is in heaven” (v.21) by sincerely submitting their heart to the Lord, the verdict for them is “I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness” (v.23, NASB). All their ostensibly good works performed in Christ's name go for nothing, because they have been going about to establish their own righteousness (Rom. 10:3) rather than yielding their “members as instruments of righteousness unto God” (Romans 6:13).

In other words, the Lord insists that a true and living faith expresses itself in deeds of righteousness and love that are motivated and directed by His Spirit. In the memorable scene described by Jesus in Matthew 25:31–46, He sits as judge over the entire professing church, made up of believers from every nation (“all the nations will be gathered before Him,” not, of course, to be judged as national units, but as individual Christians from every nation), and applies the test of godly behavior to gauge the sincerity of faith. All before Him are professing Christians, for they all address Him as “Lord” and suppose that He considers them His own. But only those who have expressed His love and compassion by feeding the hungry, giving drink to the thirsty, welcoming the stranger with hospitality, clothing the naked, and visiting those imprisoned for righteousness' sake (vv. 35–36) have displayed a true and living faith. They have shown all these kindnesses as unto the Lord Himself, out of a sincere love for Him. Those who have failed to carry out His will by a life of kindly service to others—and especially to those of the household of faith (“the least of these My brethren”) betray a counterfeit faith that is not unto salvation. They are therefore appointed a portion in hell, along with all other hypocrites (cf. Matt.

24:51; 25:46).

From this perspective we are in a better position to understand 2 Corinthians 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" (NIV). In this latter passage we are not dealing with counterfeit professors of the faith but rather with the evaluation of the fruitfulness and faithfulness of each born-again believer during his years of stewardship on earth. The appropriate reward and status in heaven will be awarded by Christ to each servant of His according to the measure of the servant's faithfulness and zeal.

The same principle obtains at the judgment of the [Great White Throne](#) in Revelation 20:12. The time locus of this judgment is at the close of the Millennium, and so there is a need to pass judgment on those of the newer generations who have grown up during the Millennium itself. While all the earth will be subject to the authority of Christ during that thousand-year period, there will be some who will outwardly conform to the Christian ethic and profess to love the Lord but will never have been truly born again. These will have performed no works recognized by Christ as truly "good". It is for this reason that the heaven-kept books of record will be consulted as each soul comes before the Lord for judgment, not only those books that record the sins of the unsaved, but also "the book of life" (v.12), which contains the names of the sincere believers of the centuries of the Millennium. All will be judged "according to their deeds," to be sure; but only those who are truly regenerate followers of Christ will have any "good deeds" entered on their record, deeds that are genuinely good because they are the works of God performed through His yielded instruments. As Jesus said to the rich young ruler in Matthew 19:17, "There is none good but God." Therefore there are no good works except those that are done by the Lord Himself through truly surrendered believers.

In light of these passages, we must conclude that neither John 5:28–29 nor any other such passage conflicts with the principle of salvation by grace through faith. It is simply a matter of distinguishing between a genuine faith and a counterfeit faith.

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#### **Walter Kaiser - John 5:28–29 Salvation by Works? - [Hard Sayings of the Bible](#)**

In John 5:28–29 Jesus is in a debate with the Judean Jews, talking about the authority of the Son of Man to command the resurrection of the dead. He then adds a comment that refers to the two classes of resurrected people, not as believers and unbelievers, but as "those who have done good" and "those who have done evil." Does not this indicate that eternal life is given on the basis of one's deeds? Is this not the very salvation by works that Luther and the other Reformers were so much against?

The first point that we should notice about this verse is that Jesus is indeed in a debate with a group of Jews, who were questioning his authority to heal a person on the sabbath. His central point is that his authority is far greater than that needed to set aside the sabbath. The healing was simply a sign of a more significant authority than they had yet seen: it is Jesus they will meet on the final judgment day! We must keep that point in mind, for the issues of faith and works are here actually peripheral to the main point Jesus is making.

Second, in saying what he says, Jesus is saying the same thing as any good rabbi of his time would say. Some of the dead were called righteous, for they had done good, and some of the dead were called unrighteous, for they had done evil. The resurrection was a time when God would set right the accounts, rewarding the righteous with "the age to come" (to use the rabbinic phrase) and barring the unrighteous from that happy kingdom. Thus what Jesus said would not have raised an eyebrow among the Jews. They knew that those who truly loved God obeyed the law and thus did good, while those who rejected God disobeyed the law and thus did evil.

However, third, Jesus is saying something much more profound than this. In John 5 Jesus has made it clear that the resurrection to life at the end of time is simply the logical conclusion of what Jesus is doing now, for after telling them that the Father has given him authority to raise the dead, Jesus adds, "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" (Jn 5:24). In other words, Jesus is able to grant eternal life now, so his resurrecting people at the end of the age is simply an extension into the physical world of what he has already done in the present in the spiritual world. Notice that the only criteria for gaining eternal life now is "hears my word and believes him who sent me." Of course, this "hearing" means not simply to listen to, but also to accept and submit to the teaching of Jesus. One who does this is in fact believing "on him who sent me," for Jesus makes it clear that to reject him is to reject his Father.

What is said here about how one gains eternal life has already been said in John 3:17–21. In that section we discover that those whose deeds are evil reject Jesus, while those whose deeds are good "come into the light." Yet what leads to condemnation or salvation is whether or not one "believes in" him ("believes in" could better be translated "entrusts oneself to" or "commits oneself to," for it is not mental assent to certain doctrines that is being talked about). In John 6:28–29 Jesus amplifies what he has said on the other two occasions. The works of God are defined as a single work: to believe in Jesus. If we accept this definition, we see that those whose deeds were evil would be those who rejected Jesus and those whose deeds were good would be those who accepted Jesus. One's attitude toward Jesus becomes the central criterion of whether one is good or evil.

Yet this is not to say that behavior is totally separated from salvation. Jesus is also the one who said, “If you love me, keep my commandments” (Jn 14:15 KJV). In other words, saying that one is committed to Jesus (or believes in Jesus, to use the traditional language) without actually obeying Jesus is so much useless hot air. It is the heart that counts, and the heart is seen in one’s actions. This is why 1 John will say that those who love Jesus will not continue to sin (see 1 Jn 3:6, 9). Real love, real faith leads to a life that shows it. Yet the life is the result of commitment, the result of eternal life residing in the person, not the cause of it.

So is John teaching salvation by works? The answer is no. That is, not unless committing oneself to Jesus is the work that one is talking about. Those who do good are those who believe on Jesus (and probably also, in Jesus’ mind, those who accepted God’s previous revelation and died before Jesus came); those who do evil are those who reject Jesus. This underlines that Jesus is the source of eternal life now, as well as the Judge at the end of time. Indeed, we could picture judgment day as Jesus calling out for all the dead to rise. Some rise and come toward him, drawn by their previous commitment to him. Others rise and turn away, for they have rejected that voice and in that sense are judged already. The one group comes to him who is life itself. The others reject life and thus choose death. What makes all of the difference is not whether one has sinned this or that sin, but whether one has committed oneself to Jesus.

#### See also comments on

- James 2:24; Justified by What You Do? - [See page 653](#)
- 1 John 3:9; No One Born of God Will Continue to Sin? - [See page 690](#)
- 3 John 11. Anyone Who Does Good Is from God? - [See page 704](#)

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**Norman Geisler - [When Critics Ask](#)** - JOHN 5:28–29—Is Jesus advocating salvation by works?

**PROBLEM:** Jesus says in John’s Gospel that the time is coming when people in the graves will hear His voice “and come forth—those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation” (v. 29). This seems to be a clear contradiction to salvation by grace (cf. Eph. 2:8–9).

**SOLUTION:** First, Jesus does not believe in salvation by works. In the beginning of John’s Gospel, John writes, “But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name: who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God” (John 1:12–13). Jesus says in John 3:16–18:

For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.

For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved. He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.

Furthermore, in John 5:24, Jesus says, “Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears My word, and believes Him who sent Me, has eternal life” (NASB). From these passages it is clear that Jesus did not believe in works salvation.

Second, Jesus’ reference to good works in John 5:28–29 is to that which occurs after saving faith. To be saved, one needs the grace of God (Eph. 2:8–9), but authentic faith expresses itself in good works (v. 10). The Apostle Paul in the Book of Romans, says something very similar to what Jesus says in John 5:28–29. In Romans Paul says that God “will render to every man according to his deeds: to those who by perseverance in doing good seek for glory and honor and immortality, eternal life; but to those who are selfishly ambitious and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, wrath and indignation” (Rom. 2:6–8, NASB). But Paul also wrote, “For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God” (Eph. 2:8). In the passage in Romans, Paul is not talking about the one who obtains eternal life by faith, but the individual who shows this life in his good works. In Ephesians, Paul is saying that none can save himself by works prior to salvation. (See also comments on James 2:21.)

So, Jesus does not contradict Himself nor the rest of Scripture concerning the matter of salvation. Those who receive the resurrection of life have shown their saving faith by their works.

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#### All The Dead Will Rise!

The hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will . . . come forth. —John 5:28-29

Today’s Scripture: John 5:24-30

In a cemetery in Hanover, Germany, stands an unusual gravestone. A woman who didn’t believe in the resurrection directed in her will that her burial place be made so secure that just in case there was a resurrection it couldn’t touch her. Huge slabs of granite

were fastened together with heavy steel clamps and placed over her grave. Engraved on the marker were these words: "This burial place must never be opened."

In time a small seed germinated just beneath the edge of the stone. As it grew into a tree and its trunk got bigger, the heavy slabs were gradually shifted and the steel clamps were wrenched from their sockets. Those massive pieces of granite could not withstand the dynamic life-force within that small seed.

Man cannot thwart the creative power of God. Jesus said that all who are in the graves will hear His voice and come forth, some to the resurrection of life and others to the resurrection of condemnation (John 5:28-29). There will be no exceptions—not even those drowned at sea or cremated. The re-creation of human bodies poses no problem to the One who spoke the world into existence out of nothing.

Will your resurrection be one of joy or one of judgment? Today, receive Jesus as your Savior and Lord! — Dennis J. DeHaan [Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

### How To Be Sure Of The Resurrection Of Life

Admit you are a sinner (Romans 3:23).

Believe that Christ died for you (Acts 16:31).

Ask Him to save you (John 1:12; Romans 10:9,13).

Christ's resurrection assures what Christ's death secures.

**John 5:30 "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.**

BGT John 5:30 Ο δ ναμαι γ ποιεν π μαυτο ο δ ν· καθ ς κο ω κρ νω, κα κρ σις μ δικα α σ ν, τι ο ζητ τ θ λημα τ μ ν λλ τ θ λημα το π μψαντ ς με.

KJV John 5:30 I can of mine own self do nothing: as I hear, I judge: and my judgment is just; because I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me.

NET John 5:30 I can do nothing on my own initiative. Just as I hear, I judge, and my judgment is just, because I do not seek my own will, but the will of the one who sent me.

CSB John 5:30 "I can do nothing on My own. I judge only as I hear, and My judgment is righteous, because I do not seek My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me.

ESV John 5:30 "I can do nothing on my own. As I hear, I judge, and my judgment is just, because I seek not my own will but the will of him who sent me.

NIV John 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.

NLT John 5:30 I can do nothing on my own. I judge as God tells me. Therefore, my judgment is just, because I carry out the will of the one who sent me, not my own will.

NRS John 5:30 "I can do nothing on my own. As I hear, I judge; and my judgment is just, because I seek to do not my own will but the will of him who sent me.

NJB John 5:30 By myself I can do nothing; I can judge only as I am told to judge, and my judging is just, because I seek to do not my own will but the will of him who sent me.

NAB John 5:30 "I cannot do anything on my own; I judge as I hear, and my judgment is just, because I do not seek my own will but the will of the one who sent me.

YLT John 5:30 'I am not able of myself to do anything; according as I hear I judge, and my judgment is righteous, because I seek not my own will, but the will of the Father who sent me.

- **can:** Jn 5:19 8:28,42 14:10
- **I judge:** Jn 8:15,16 Ge 18:25 Ps 96:13 Isa 11:3,4 Ro 2:2,5
- **because:** Jn 4:34 6:38 8:50 17:4 18:11 Ps 40:7,8 Mt 26:39 Ro 15:3 Ho 10:7-10
- [John 5 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## Related Passages:

John 5:19 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.

John 4:34; Jesus \*said to them, "My food is **to do the will of Him who sent Me** and to accomplish His work.

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

John 8:29 "And He who sent Me is with Me; He has not left Me alone, for **I always do the things that are pleasing to Him.**"

John 17:4 "I glorified You on the earth, **having accomplished the work which You have given Me to do.**

## JESUS' ACTIONS IN HARMONY WITH FATHER

In John 5:30 -47 Jesus presents Five Witnesses to Himself as the Son of God - Father, Son, John the Baptist, His works, Moses (OT Scriptures).

**I** (ego) **can do** (absolutely) **nothing on My own initiative** ([emautou](#)) - Jesus switches from "the Son" in Jn 5:19 to the first person "I" as in Jn 8:28. Literally "nothing from myself" - Jesus' discourse returns to the first person **I** (ego) having spoke of the Son since Jn 5:19. He is not saying that he has no power to do anything by Himself. His point is similar to the preceding statement in John 5:19 that He is so perfectly united (perfect oneness and union) that He could not act by Himself. Stated another way Jesus is saying it is impossible for the Son to do anything on His own initiative apart from the Father, because the two share the same divine nature.

**Nothing** is first in Greek to emphasize absolutely nothing! The Father's will is Jesus' will so perfect is their unity/oneness. **Own initiative** conveys the idea of on His own authority or own free will. To what does this refer? It indicates that what Jesus does is initiated by another and as we have seen in Jn 5:19 this clearly refers to His Father. And once again Jesus is emphasizing His perfect oneness with His Father and thus indirectly reiterating that He is also divine. Jesus is saying that He is not able to anything based solely on what He wants.

**Bob Utley** - Jesus, the incarnated Logos of God was subject to and submissive to the Father. This strong emphasis on submission also appears in John 5:19 ("the Son can do nothing"). This does not imply the Son is inferior, but that the Trinity has delegated the redemptive tasks among the three distinct persons, Father, Son, and Spirit. Jesus is only subservient in time, not eternity. [SPECIAL TOPIC: THE TRINITY SPECIAL TOPIC: SUBMISSION](#)

**Chrysostom** remarks,—“Just as when we say, it is impossible for God to do wrong, we do not impute to Him any weakness, but confess in Him an unutterable power; so also when Christ saith, ‘I can of my own self do nothing,’ the meaning is that it is impossible,—my nature admits not,—that I should do anything contrary to the Father...when Christ speaks of ‘hearing,’ He declares nothing else than that it is impossible for Him to desire anything except what the Father desires.”

**Swindoll** on the shift to **I** (ego) - Note the sudden shift in perspective. Throughout the speech, Jesus has referred to Himself in the third person, using the titles “Son of God” and “Son of Man.” As He transitions from this portion of the speech (Jn 5:19–30) to the next (Jn 5:31–47), He restates His original claim, “**The Son can do nothing of Himself, unless it is something He sees the Father doing**” (Jn 5:19), only now in the first person (“I”). His point is clear. He was not referring to some other person; He was making these claims about Himself. Stop for a few moments and seriously consider these six claims. Think of the best person in all of history (other than Jesus Christ), living or dead. Imagine him or her standing before you to make a speech having these six points:

1. I am equal with God the Father.
2. I am the giver of life.
3. I am the final judge over all of humanity.
4. I hold the destiny of every human in my hand.
5. I will raise the dead.
6. Everything I do is the will of God.

How would you respond? Of all the great philosophers, teachers, artists, and statesmen who ever lived, none would dare make such claims unless he or she were either completely insane or shamelessly evil. Not unless He was indeed God in human flesh. (Borrow [Insights on John](#))



**As I hear** - In Jn 5:19+ Jesus said it was what He **saw** His Father doing, and now says it is something He hears His Father doing. Once again Jesus is making it very clear that he and the Father are one (cf Jn 10:30-33+) and thus reiterates the holy harmony of the Father and the Son. Later in John Jesus will explain to His disciples that the Holy Spirit has the same oneness declaring

“But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all the truth; for **He will not speak on His own initiative**, but **whatever He hears, He will speak**; and He will disclose to you what is to come. (Jn 16:13+)

**William MacDonald** comments that "There was no trace of willfulness in the Savior. He acted in perfect obedience to His Father and always in fullest fellowship and harmony with Him." (Borrow [Believer's Bible Commentary](#))

**I judge (krino); and My judgment (krisis) is just** (righteous; [dikaios](#)) - **I judge** indicates it is Jesus Who actually carries out the judgment, but it is clear in line with the will of His Father. And since the Father is perfect justice, it follows that Jesus' judgment likewise is perfect and **just**, i.e, corresponding to God's perfect standard.

**My judgment is just** may have reminded the Jews of Isaiah's prophecy about Messiah

"And He (MESSIAH) will delight in the fear of the LORD, And **He will not judge by what His eyes see, Nor make a decision by what His ears hear.**" (Isa. 11:3+)

**Because** (hoti) - What is Jesus explaining? Why His judgment is just/righteous.

**A T Robertson** on **just, because** - As all judgements should be. The reason is plain (hoti, **because**), the guiding principle with the Son being the will of the Father Who sent Him and made Him Judge. Judges often have difficulty in knowing what is law and what is right, but the Son's task as Judge is simple enough, the will of the Father which He knows (John 5:20). ([Word Pictures of the New Testament](#))

**I do not seek (zeteo) My own will (thelema), but the will (thelema) of Him who sent Me** (see [Related Passages](#) above) - Jesus explains why His **judgment is just** and it is because it is perfectly aligned with the **will** of His Father in Heaven.

**Steven Cole** - In God's eternal plan, the Father sent the Son to bear our sin and the Son submitted to the Father's will. Everything that Jesus did while He was on earth He did in submission to the Father. Thus He wasn't bearing witness of Himself independently of the Father. ([The Witnesses to Jesus John 5:30-40](#))

**J C Ryle** has an interesting comment - "**I seek not mine own will**" must be interpreted with special reference to our Lord's Divine nature, as Son of God. Having as God, one will with the Father, it was not possible for Him to seek His own will independently of the Father. Hence the judgment was not His only, but His Father's also.—As Son of Man He had a human will distinct from His Divine will, as when He said, "Let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt." (Mt 26:39.) But the will here seems to be His Divine will.....Once more we must remember the extreme difficulty of handling such a subject as the one before us. The distinction between the Persons in the Trinity, and the Unity of their essence at the same time, must always be a deep thing to man, hard to conceive, and harder still to speak or write about. ([John 5 Commentary](#))

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**My own initiative** (1683)(emautou) is a reflexive pronoun of the first person which means myself. Of myself, to myself, myself (Luke 7:7; John 5:31; 8:14, 18, 54; 1 Cor. 4:3; 2 Cor. 2:1) **Friberg** - (1) as a possessive genitive with a noun - my own (1Co 10:33); (2) with a verb - myself (Jn 14:21); (3) with prepositions: (a) π . on my own (authority), of my own accord (Jn 7:17); of my own free will (Jn 10:18); (b) π μαυτόν under my authority (Lk 7:8); (c) περ . about or concerning myself (Jn 8:14); (d) πρ ς μαυτόν to Myself (Jn 12:32); (e) π ρ . on my own behalf, for myself (2Co 12:5)

**Emautou** -33x/33v - **myself(24), own(2), own initiative(6), own sake(1)**. Lk. 7:7; Jn. 5:30; Jn. 5:31; Jn. 7:17; Jn. 7:28; Jn. 8:14; Jn. 8:18; Jn. 8:28; Jn. 8:42; Jn. 8:54; Jn. 10:18; Jn. 12:32; Jn. 12:49; Jn. 14:3; Jn. 14:10; Jn. 14:21; Jn. 17:19; Acts 20:24; Acts 26:2; Acts 26:9; Rom. 11:4; 1 Co. 4:3; 1 Co. 4:4; 1 Co. 4:6; 1 Co. 7:7; 1 Co. 9:19; 1 Co. 10:33; 2 Co. 2:1; 2 Co. 11:7; 2 Co. 11:9; 2 Co. 12:5; Gal. 2:18; Phil. 3:13

**Judge** (decide, determine, condemn)(2919) **krino** and its cognates [see below] is a root of English words like critic, critical [kritikos] = a decisive point at which judgment is made) primarily signifies to distinguish, to decide between (in the sense of considering two or more things and reaching a decision), to make up one's mind, to separate, to discriminate. to distinguish between good and evil, right and wrong, without necessarily passing an adverse sentence, although that is often what is usually involved. **Krino** has various shades of meaning which must be determined from the context. **Krino** means to judge and always involves the process of thinking through a situation and coming to a conclusion. The term could be used in a narrowly judicial sense but it also has several nuances related to judging in a more general sense. In nonjudicial contexts, krino can mean to select, prefer, decide, consider. **Wuest** gives an excellent sense of the progression of meaning of **krino** - The word **krino** meant originally to **separate**, then to **distinguish**, to pick out, to be of opinion, and finally, to **judge**. The act of judgment was therefore that of forming an accurate and honest opinion of

someone, thus, appraising his character, and placing him in a certain position with respect to the law of God. The result of such a judgment is commonly **condemnation**. (Wuest's word studies from the Greek New Testament)

**Krino in the Gospels** - Matt. 5:40; Matt. 7:1; Matt. 7:2; Matt. 19:28; Lk. 6:37; Lk. 7:43; Lk. 12:57; Lk. 19:22; Lk. 22:30; Jn. 3:17; Jn. 3:18; Jn. 5:22; Jn. 5:30; Jn. 7:24; Jn. 7:51; Jn. 8:15; Jn. 8:16; Jn. 8:26; Jn. 8:50; Jn. 12:47; Jn. 12:48; Jn. 16:11; Jn. 18:31

**Just** (1342) (**dikaios** from **dike** = right, just) defines that which is in accordance with high standards of **rectitude**. It is that which is in right relation to another and so in reference to persons defines the one who is morally and ethically righteous, upright or just.

**Will** (2307) **thelema** from **thelo** = to will with the "-ma" suffix indicating the result of the will = "a thing willed") generally speaks of the result of what one has decided. One sees this root word in the feminine name "**Thelma**." In its most basic form, **thelema** refers to a wish, a strong desire, and the willing of some event. (**Note**: See also the discussion of the preceding word **boule** for comments relating to thelema). **Zodhiates** says that **thelema** is the "Will, not to be conceived as a demand, but as an expression or inclination of pleasure towards that which is liked, that which pleases and creates joy. When it denotes God's will, it signifies His gracious disposition toward something. Used to designate what God Himself does of His own good pleasure. ([Complete Word Study Dictionary: New Testament](#)) **Thelema** has both an objective meaning ("what one wishes to happen" or what is willed) and a subjective connotation ("the act of willing or desiring"). The word conveys the idea of desire, even a heart's desire, for the word primarily expresses emotion instead of volition. Thus God's will is not so much God's intention, as it is His heart's desire.

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**Steven Cole gives us background on John 5:30-47** - How can you know for sure that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God? An old hymn put it, "You ask me how I know He lives? He lives within my heart." Okay, but that's pretty subjective. A Buddhist might say that Buddha lives within his heart. How can you verify such a thing? A critic might say that Jesus is just a legend or myth. Or, maybe the apostles embellished stories about Him so that what we read is far from the actual truth. Perhaps He was just a great religious teacher who was tragically murdered because of jealous men who felt threatened by Him.

If you've ever sat on a jury or watched a courtroom drama or followed a trial on the news, you know that having multiple witnesses of reputable character who all say the same thing independently of one another is crucial to prove a case. Those who are called on to bear witness in court must swear to tell the truth or be liable for perjury. A witness is not free to make up his own story; he must report the facts as he saw them. If the witnesses are credible people who give consistent witness, the case is pretty secure.

In our text, Jesus continues His defense to the Jews, who were accusing Him of breaking the Sabbath and of making Himself equal with God (Jn 5:18). Instead of backing off and responding with horror to such charges, Jesus sets forth His case in even stronger terms by showing that He is one with the Father in all of His actions. He asserts (Jn 5:22-23) that the Father "has given all judgment to the Son so that all will honor the Son even as they honor the Father." He asserts that He has life in Himself and that in the future He will speak and all who have ever lived will come forth from the tombs for a resurrection either of life or of judgment (Jn 5:26, 28-29). Clearly, Jesus is claiming to be equal with God.

But, how do we know that these claims are true? What evidence backs them up? Would they hold up in court? In answer to these questions and in deference to Jewish law, which required at least two or three witnesses to establish any legal matter, Jesus gives a number of witnesses to verify His claims.

**Testimony** or **witness** (**martureo** = verb; **marturia** = noun) was an important concept to John. He uses the noun and verb 47 times in this Gospel and 30 more times in his epistles and in Revelation (Edwin Blum, *The Bible Knowledge Commentary* [Victor Books], ed. by John F. Walvoord & Roy Zuck, 2:291).

**We don't need to take a blind leap of faith.**

**God has provided adequate testimony that Jesus is the truth.**

Actually, there is one main witness, the Father, who uses these various witnesses to testify to the truth of who Jesus is. As John argues (1 John 5:9), "If we receive the testimony of men, the testimony of God is greater; for the testimony of God is this, that He has testified concerning His Son." Every day we accept the testimony of men. When you go to the store, you don't run a chemical analysis of every item that you buy, to make sure that it isn't contaminated. You trust that the company has followed basic health procedures and that the store has kept the goods from spoilage or contamination. You go to the bank and hand over an endorsed paycheck to a teller whom you don't know and trust that she really put it into your account. I could go on and on with examples of how you accept the testimony of fallible men, even men that you do not know, every day. So, John argues, why do we not accept the testimony that God has given concerning His Son?

In our text, the Father is the "**another**" (5:32) who testifies in conjunction with Jesus Himself.

- Also, the Father used **John the Baptist** to bear witness to Jesus (Jn 5:33-35).

- The Father used Jesus' works (miracles) which He gave Jesus to do to bear witness of Him (Jn 5:36).
- The Father used the Scriptures to bear witness of Jesus (Jn 5:37–47).
- Since all of these witnesses line up, the case for Jesus is solid: He is the Christ, the Son of God (Jn 20:31). ([The Witnesses to Jesus](#))

### John 5:31 "If I alone testify about Myself, My testimony is not true.

BGT John 5:31 ν γ μαρτυρ περ μαυτο , μαρτυρ αμου ο κ σιν ληθ ς·

KJV John 5:31 If I bear witness of myself, my witness is not true.

NET John 5:31 "If I testify about myself, my testimony is not true.

CSB John 5:31 "If I testify about Myself, My testimony is not valid.

ESV John 5:31 If I alone bear witness about myself, my testimony is not true.

NIV John 5:31 "If I testify about myself, my testimony is not valid.

NLT John 5:31 "If I were to testify on my own behalf, my testimony would not be valid.

NRS John 5:31 "If I testify about myself, my testimony is not true.

NJB John 5:31 Were I to testify on my own behalf, my testimony would not be true;

NAB John 5:31 "If I testify on my own behalf, my testimony cannot be verified.

Phillips You may say that I am bearing witness about myself, that therefore what I say about myself has no value,

YLT John 5:31 'If I testify concerning myself, my testimony is not true;

- Jn 8:13-14,54 Pr 27:2 Rev 3:14
- [John 5 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

### Related Passages

Proverbs 27:2 Let another praise you, and not your own mouth; A stranger, and not your own lips.

John 8:13-14 So the Pharisees said to Him, "You are testifying about Yourself; Your testimony is not true." 14 Jesus answered and said to them, "Even if I testify about Myself, **My testimony is true**, for I know where I came from and where I am going; but you do not know where I come from or where I am going.

Revelation 3:14 "To the angel of the church in Laodicea write: The Amen, **the faithful and true Witness** (JESUS), the Beginning of the creation of God, says this:

Deuteronomy 19:15 "A single witness shall not rise up against a man on account of any iniquity or any sin which he has committed; on the evidence of two or three witnesses a matter shall be confirmed.

## JESUS ADDRESSES HIS SELF-TESTIMONY

**Charles Swindoll** points out that "Jesus declared no less than six truths about Himself in John 5:19–30 (**ED: [SEE LIST ABOVE](#)**), all of which point to a single overarching declaration that demands a response. **Jesus claimed equality with God**, which left humanity no room for compromise, no middle ground on which to stand. We must choose to believe or reject His declaration." (Borrow [Insights on John](#))

**The Pulpit Commentary** adds a note on the reactions of the Jews that while not in the text is certainly a reasonable consideration - At this point the Lord proceeds to meet the clamour which most probably arose, the doubt and questioning which broke the silence with which his solemn defence had been received. We can hear **between the lines** the cries of an excited crowd, declaring that these words are simply his own. Such testimony as this to Himself must be sustained and sanctioned. Why and how can this Teacher take such ground as to assert about Himself what no prophet, no rabbi, no chief priest of the people, not even the greatest man of men, Moses himself, had ever dared to claim?

Now in John 5:31-47 Jesus calls more witnesses to the stand (so to speak) to substantiate His self-testimony for His ultimate goal was to "say these things so that you may be saved." He came to seek and save the lost, not to win an argument!

**IF** is a 3rd class conditional sentence which speaks of potential action.

**If I alone** (and no other witnesses) **testify** ([martureo](#)) **about Myself** ([emautou](#)), **My testimony** ([marturia](#)) **is not true** ([alethes](#)) - What is the **testimony** to which Jesus is referring? He is referring to His claim of deity in the previous section, "**calling God His Own Father, making Himself equal with God.**" (Jn 5:18+) and then substantiating it with His claims in (Jn 5:19-30). But this was all self-testimony. Is Jesus now saying His self-testimony was false? And how do we resolve His words here with His declaration in Jn 8:14 that "**My testimony is true**"? How can Jesus' testimony be not true and true? Remember that Scripture never contradicts itself. So how do we resolve this "apparent contradiction?" Numerous explanations have been offered, but the most straightforward is that He is simply saying that His self-testimony in (Jn 5:19-30) was the witness of one person, Himself.

**Steven Cole** explains "a Jewish lawyer would have said at this point, "Yes, but self-evidence is not admissible in a court of law. There must be outside testimony." Jewish law required the testimony of two or three witnesses to establish the truth (Dt. 19:15+, cf Dt 17:6+). Jesus condescends to this point here in Jn 5:31....acknowledging that His testimony would not be valid if He were acting independently of the Father. So He goes on to give other witnesses to His claim." ([Witnesses to Jesus Jn 5:30-40](#))

**John Heading** essentially agrees writing that Jesus "meant that, as a sole witness, the Jews would not accept His testimony as true. To those who knew His Person, His sole testimony was accepted as absolutely true, as when He testified that He was the Christ and the Son (ED: SEE PETER'S CONFESSION IN Jn 6:68-69+)." ([What the Bible Teaches - John](#))

[David Guzik](#) - Jesus has just told the Jews that He is God, but His testimony alone is not enough.

[Bob Utley](#) - **My testimony is not true**" This seems to contradict John 8:14. Context shows that these statements are made in different settings. Here Jesus shows how many other witnesses there are, but in John 8:14 He asserts that only His is necessary! Verse 22 shows the Father also testifies! For "true" see [SPECIAL TOPIC: "TRUTH" \(the concept\) IN JOHN'S WRITINGS](#).

**William MacDonald** adds on **My testimony is not true** that "This did not mean for a moment that the Lord Jesus could ever say anything that was not true. Rather, He was simply stating a general fact that the witness of a single person was not considered sufficient evidence in a court of law. God's divine decree was that at least two or three witnesses were required before a valid judgment could be formed. And so the Lord Jesus was about to give not two or three, but four witnesses to His deity." (Borrow [Believer's Bible Commentary](#))

[A T Robertson](#) adds that in Jn 5:31 "Jesus yields to the rabbinical demand for proof outside of himself. (ROBERTSON THEN LISTS THE OTHER "WITNESSES") He has the witness of another (the Father, Jn 5:37), the witness of the Baptist (Jn 5:33), the witness of the works of Jesus (Jn 5:36), the witness of the Scriptures (Jn 5:39), the witness of Moses in particular (Jn 5:45)."

**R C H Lenski** says that "here Jesus accepts the common rule concerning testimony in a man's own behalf. He says in substance, "I do not ask you to take my word alone concerning who I really am." (Borrow [The interpretation of St. John's gospel](#))

**John MacArthur's** explanation is similar to the preceding commentators but slightly different - He did not mean to imply that His self-witness is unreliable (cf. Jn 8:14). His point was that His Jewish opponents claimed His own self-testimony was not sufficient. The issue was not whether that testimony was true in itself, but whether His opponents would believe Him. So He offered more testimony as evidence. ([John 1-11 MacArthur New Testament Commentary](#))

**Charles Swindoll** - The testimony of a defendant is not considered valid unless it is supported either by undisputed fact or reliable testimony. Moreover, testimony must come from more than one witness. Jewish courts accepted corroborating testimony from multiple witnesses as indisputable proof, truth that could not be denied. (Borrow [Insights on John](#))

**Colin Kruse** - According to the Mishnah, people's testimony to themselves was not valid in law; it had to be corroborated by other witnesses (m. Ketub. 2:9: 'But none may be believed [as a witness in a court of law] when he testifies of himself'). Jesus did not accept their rule (see Jn 8:14), but acknowledging it for the sake of argument, he said, (Jn 5:33) There is another who testifies in my favour, and I know that his testimony about me is true. The Father himself is Jesus' other witness, his primary witness, but he had other corroborative witnesses as well. (Borrow [The Gospel according to John : an introduction and commentary](#))

As **J C Ryle** points out "This verse must be interpreted with caution and reasonable qualification. It would be folly and blasphemy to say that our Lord's testimony about Himself must be false. What the verse does appear to mean is this:—"If I have no other testimony to bring forward in proof of My Messiahship but My own word, my testimony would be justly open to suspicion."—Our Lord knew that in any disputed question a man's assertions in his own favour are worth little or nothing. He tells the Jews that He did not want them to believe Him merely because He said He was the Son of God. He would show them that He had other witnesses, and

these witnesses He next proceeds to bring forward." ([John 5 Commentary](#))

**Note** keywords in this last section of John 5 - (1) **Testify** ([martureo](#)) in John 5 occurring in Jn 5:31, 32, 33, 36, 37, 39. (2) **Testimony** ([marturia](#)) in John 5:31, 32, 34, 36 and (3) **true/truth** - Jn 5:31, 32, 33.

**Steven Cole** on Jesus' self-testimony **not true** - John repeatedly emphasizes "truth" in this gospel. As Leon Morris states ([The Gospel according to John - BORROW](#), p. 293), "Truth is characteristic of God, and it is only as we know God that we know truth" He points out (p. 294) that John uses the Greek noun for "truth" 25 times in his Gospel, plus 20 more times in his epistles (as against only once in Matthew and three times each in Mark and Luke). He also uses two other Greek words meaning "true" far more than other New Testament authors do. Later (John 8:13), the Pharisees said to Jesus, "You are testifying about Yourself; Your testimony is not true." On that occasion, Jesus replied (Jn 8:14), "Even if I testify about Myself, My testimony is true, for I know where I came from and where I am going; but you do not know where I come from or where I am going." So even though self-testimony may not be sufficient in a court of law, it does not follow that it's not true. This is especially so when it came from Jesus, who was sent to earth by the Father and knew that He would return to the Father after He accomplished the Father's will. But then Jesus added (Jn 8:17-18), "Even in your law it has been written that the testimony of two men is true. I am He who testifies about Myself, and the Father who sent Me testifies about Me." A man's self-testimony depends heavily on his character. If a man is known for lying and manipulating the facts to serve himself, you're not going to believe him even if he really is speaking the truth. But everything that we know about Jesus points to His integrity. At His trial, the Jewish authorities couldn't find witnesses to agree about the charges they were leveling at Him. After examining Jesus, Pilate said (Jn 18:38), "I find no guilt in Him." The men who were closest to Jesus, who spent three years watching Him in all sorts of situations, all testify to His sinless character. So Jesus' point in Jn 5:30-32 is that His self-testimony is true because He never acted independently of the Father. The Father bore witness to Jesus through Jesus' own testimony about Himself...A man's self-testimony depends heavily on his character. If a man is known for lying and manipulating the facts to serve himself, you're not going to believe him even if he really is speaking the truth. But everything that we know about Jesus points to His integrity. At His trial, the Jewish authorities couldn't find witnesses to agree about the charges they were leveling at Him. After examining Jesus, Pilate said (Jn 18:38), "I find no guilt in Him." The men who were closest to Jesus, who spent three years watching Him in all sorts of situations, all testify to His sinless character. So Jesus' point in Jn 5:30-32 is that His self-testimony is true because He never acted independently of the Father. The Father bore witness to Jesus through Jesus' own testimony about Himself. ([The Witnesses to Jesus](#) - John 5:30-40)

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**Testify** (witness) (3140) [martureo](#) from [martus/martys](#) = witness = one who has information or knowledge of something and can bring to light or confirm something. English = *martyr*) in its most basic sense refers to a legal witness. To confirm or attest something on the basis of personal knowledge or belief. Thus the verb **martureo** means to be a witness, to testify, to give evidence, to give testimony, to bear record, to affirm that one has seen or heard or experienced something. The words testified related to fact, not opinion, as in a courtroom setting.

[Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament \(borrow\)](#) - **Martureo** is "used of the activity of a [martus/martys](#) (witness); (1) of a human declaration of ascertainable facts based on firsthand knowledge or experience bear witness to, declare, confirm (Ro 10:2); (2) absolutely, of a good report; (a) active give a good report, speak well (of), approve (of) (Lk 4:22); (b) passive receive a good report, be well-spoken of, be approved, have a good reputation (Acts 6:3); (3) of an emphatic declaration by an existing authority, such as God, the Spirit, Scripture testify, declare, witness (solemnly) (Heb 7:17); (4) of religious witness to truth and the factual content of the gospel as revealed truth from God be a witness, tell about, testify (Acts 23:11)."

**Martureo** uses in **John** - Jn. 1:7; Jn. 1:8; Jn. 1:15; Jn. 1:32; Jn. 1:34; Jn. 2:25; Jn. 3:11; Jn. 3:26; Jn. 3:28; Jn. 3:32; Jn. 4:39; Jn. 4:44; Jn. 5:31; Jn. 5:32; Jn. 5:33; Jn. 5:36; Jn. 5:37; Jn. 5:39; Jn. 7:7; Jn. 8:13; Jn. 8:14; Jn. 8:18; Jn. 10:25; Jn. 12:17; Jn. 13:21; Jn. 15:26; Jn. 15:27; Jn. 18:23; Jn. 18:37; Jn. 19:35; Jn. 21:24

**Testimony** (3141) [marturia/martyria](#) related to [martureo](#) = to witness <> [martus/martys](#) = a witness) is that which furnishes evidence or proof. A **testimony** is a solemn declaration or affirmation made for the purpose of establishing or proving some fact. **Marturia** can be the witness per se. A witness is one who has first hand knowledge and so the purpose of John the Baptist was to bear witness of Messiah (the Light) so that all might believe through Him (Jn 1:7). **Marturia** in other contexts can refer to the content of what the witness speaks - testimony, evidence (Mk 14:55). In 1Ti 3:7 the sense of **marturia** is that of one's reputation (think of it as the "witness" of their life and their character before others). A witness does not speak on his own behalf, though he may share his own experience, but primarily the purpose of the witness is to tell about another. **Marturia** and the verb **martureo** are predominantly Johannine words - **Witness** is also one of the major themes of John's Gospel. **Martureo** occurs 33 times (cp 1x in Matthew, 1x in Luke, none in Mark) and the noun **marturia** 14 times (0 in Mt, 1x in Luke, 3x in Mark).

**Martureo** - 32x/28v - reputation(1), testimony(30), witness(1). Mk. 14:55; Mk. 14:56; Mk. 14:59; Lk. 22:71; Jn. 1:7; Jn. 1:19; Jn. 3:33; **Jn. 5:31; Jn. 5:32; Jn. 5:34; Jn. 5:36;** Jn. 8:13; Jn. 8:17; Jn. 21:24; Acts 22:18; 1 Tim. 3:7; Tit. 1:13; 1 Jn. 5:9; 1 Jn. 5:10; 1 Jn. 5:11; Rev. 1:2; Rev. 1:9; Rev. 6:9; Rev. 11:7; Rev. 12:11; Rev. 12:17;



**True** (227) **alethes** from **a** = negates + **letho** [from **lanthano**] = to escape notice, be hid; related **aletheia** is an adjective which literally describes that which does not escape notice. Thus **alethes** describes that which is manifest, that which is unconcealed, that which conforms to reality (and thus is genuine), that which is in accordance with facts, that which is real (authentic, not imaginary). **Alethes** is used to describe **Jesus** several times in the Gospels - Mt 22:16; Mk 12:14; Jn 7:18. **Alethes** describes that which is true, sincere, real, correct, faithful, trustworthy, genuine, veracious. **Alethes** can mean loving or speaking the truth (truthful) (Mt 22:16, Mk 12:14, Jn 7:18, 2Cor 6:8). God Himself is referred to as true (Jn 3:33, 8:26, Ro 3:4). Other things described as true include testimony (Jn 5:31,32, 8:13, 14, Jn 19:35, 21:24, 3Jn 1:12), grace (1Pe 5:12), proverb (2Pe 2:22), true commandment (1Jn 2:8). **Alethes** describes that which conforms to reality, that which is unconcealed, that which is manifest, that which is in accordance with facts, that which is characterized by reality (and thus is genuine), that which is real (authentic, not imaginary). **Alethes** is used to describe **Jesus** several times in the Gospels - Mt 22:16; Mk 12:14; Jn 7:18.

**Norman Geisler - [When Critics Ask](#) - JOHN 5:31—Was Jesus’ self-testimony true or false?**

**PROBLEM:** In John 8:14 Jesus said, “If I bear witness of Myself, My witness is true.” But here in John 5:31 He seems to say just the opposite, namely, “If I bear witness of Myself, My witness is not true.”

**SOLUTION:** There are two ways to understand this verse—hypothetically or actually. On the first interpretation, Jesus is saying in essence, “Even if you don’t accept my testimony about Myself, you should accept that of John the Baptist in whose ministry you rejoiced” (cf. Jn 5:32). Others take the verse as declarative, not hypothetical, claiming both texts are true, but in different senses. That is, everything Jesus said was actually true, but officially it was only considered true if it was verified by “two or three witnesses” (Dt 19:15). Since Jesus was “truth” incarnate (Jn 14:6), everything He said was true. However, since He is trying to establish His claims to the Jews, He notes that they need not accept His words alone, but also the witness of the Scriptures and the Father. The difference between these two passages can be outlined as follows:

JESUS’ SELF-WITNESS WAS TRUE	JESUS’ SELF-WITNESS WASN’T TRUE
Actually	Officially
Personally	Legally
In itself	To the Jews

**John 5:32 "There is another who testifies of Me, and I know that the testimony which He gives about Me is true.**

AMP There is another [My Father] who testifies about Me, and I know [without any doubt] that His testimony on My behalf is true and valid.

AMPC There is Another Who testifies concerning Me, and I know and am certain that His evidence on My behalf is true and valid.

BGT John 5:32 ἄλλος σὶν μαρτυρῶν περὶ μου, καὶ ὁ ὅτι ληθὲς σὶν μαρτυρῶν μαρτυρεῖ περὶ μου.

KJV John 5:32 There is another that beareth witness of me; and I know that the witness which he witnesseth of me is true.

NET John 5:32 There is another who testifies about me, and I know the testimony he testifies about me is true.

CSB John 5:32 There is Another who testifies about Me, and I know that the testimony He gives about Me is valid.

ESV John 5:32 There is another who bears witness about me, and I know that the testimony that he bears about me is true.

HCSB There is Another who testifies about Me, and I know that the testimony He gives about Me is valid.

Message But an independent witness confirms me, the most reliable Witness of all.

NIV John 5:32 There is another who testifies in my favor, and I know that his testimony about me is valid.

NLT John 5:32 But someone else is also testifying about me, and I assure you that everything he says about me is true.

NRS John 5:32 There is another who testifies on my behalf, and I know that his testimony to me is true.



NJB John 5:32 but there is another witness who speaks on my behalf, and I know that his testimony is true.

NAB John 5:32 But there is another who testifies on my behalf, and I know that the testimony he gives on my behalf is true.

YLT John 5:32 another there is who is testifying concerning me, and I have known that the testimony that he doth testify concerning me is true;

- **another:** Jn 5:36-37 Jn 1:33 Jn 8:17-18 Jn 12:28-30 Mt 3:17 17:5 Mk 1:11 Lu 3:22 1Jn 5:6-9
- **and I:** Jn 12:50
- [John 5 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### John 5:32-47 - Jesus Now Calls 5 Witnesses to the Stand:

- Witness 1: God the Father (Jn 5:32, 37–38)
- Witness 2: John the forerunner (Jn 5:33–35)
- Witness 3: Jesus' "signs" (Jn 5:36)
- Witness 4: The Scriptures (Jn 5:39–44)
- Witness 5: Moses (Jn 5:45–47) (Some include with #4)

### FIRST WITNESS: "ANOTHER" = THE FATHER

There is another ([allos](#)) who testifies ([martureo](#) in present tense - continually) of Me, and I know ([eido](#) in perfect tense) that the testimony ([marturia](#)) which He gives (literally *He testifies* [[martureo](#)]- again in present tense) about Me is true ([alethes](#)) - Another is [allos](#) which usually means **another** of the same kind as contrasted with heteros. For example, in Jn 14:16 Jesus tells His disciples "I will ask the Father, and He will give you **another** ([allos](#)) Helper, that He may be with you forever; Who is **another** in this verse? The possibilities include God the Father and John the Baptist, but some add the Holy Spirit. The most likely interpretation is that this refers to the Father as discussed below. Note how the NAS, NKJV and Amplified (et al) capitalize "**He**" (in "He gives") showing they favor this is a reference to God. While I agree with them, keep in mind that every translation has elements of interpretation which is one reason it is always good to compare other translations (or read the original language if you are able).

John writes in his first letter - "If we receive the testimony of men, the testimony of God is greater; for the testimony of God is this, that He has testified concerning His Son." (1 John 5:9)

The word for **know** ([eido](#)) means to know beyond a shadow of a doubt, to know intuitively. Jesus is saying "I have perfect knowledge" about this witness and of course that is the case for He and His Father have a unique oneness and perfect communication. The word **true** ([alethes](#)) emphasizes that this testimony would be acceptable in a courtroom setting. **Ryle** adds "I **know** probably implies the deep consciousness which our Lord had, even in His humiliation, of His Father's perfect righteousness and truthfulness. It means much more than a mere man's "I know." "I know and have known from all eternity that my Father's testimony is perfect truth." ([John 5 Commentary](#))

**D A Carson** on **another** - He has already said in the strongest terms that all he says and does—including therefore his witness—is nothing other than a reflection of his perfect obedience to his Father. He says and does only what the Father wants him to say and do. His witness is therefore not simply his own witness; it is the witness of the Father. There is another who testifies in my favour (v. 32), he declares, and in the light of the preceding verses this 'another' (cf. Additional Note) must be the Father. (Borrow [The Gospel according to John](#))

**A T Robertson** on **another** - The Father, not the Baptist who is mentioned in John 5:33. This continual witness of the Father (ho marturōn, who is bearing witness, and marturei, present active indicative) is mentioned again in John 5:36-38. ([Word Pictures of the New Testament](#))

**Charles Swindoll** - This "another" is, of course, God the Father (Jn 5:36–37). Without denying complete unity or oneness with the Father, Jesus treated the Father's testimony as independent (Borrow [Insights on John](#))

**Leon Morris** on **another** - Jesus does not name that Other who bears witness, but it is plain enough that he is referring to the Father; the suggestion that John the Baptist is in mind (accepted, i.e., by Marsh [p. 268]) is negated by v. 34. Jesus' consciousness of mission and of his relationship to the Father does not rest simply on his own convictions. The Father bears witness to him. The witness of the Father may not be acceptable to the Jews; it may not even be recognized by them. But it is enough for Jesus. He

knows that this witness is "true." His word order puts emphasis on "true." For him it is important that there is a witness apart from himself. His ministry does not arise from any human volition. And the witness is such that he can rely on it. "I know that his testimony ... is true." It is the witness of the Father and nothing else that brings conviction to him. ([The Gospel according to John - BORROW](#))

**J Michaels Ramsey** - "**Another**" testifies on his behalf, Jesus claims, fulfilling the ancient requirement of two witnesses (compare 8:18). The reader knows that he can only mean "the One who sent me" (vv. 24, 30), the One he has repeatedly called "Father" (see vv. 17–23). His accusers do not know this, but he will shortly make it explicit (see v. 37). Nothing has been said so far about the Father's "testimony" for Jesus, but now in a single verse we hear, almost redundantly, of "the One testifying about me," and of "the testimony he testifies about me." (Borrow [The Gospel of John](#))

**R C H Lenski** favors **another** as referring to the Father - Not for one moment does Jesus ask the Jews to accept his own lone testimony in his own behalf. Then, indeed, they might appeal to the common legal rule stated. On the contrary, Jesus has the greatest and most competent witness imaginable. When he adds, "and I know that the witness is true," etc., the word "true" must be taken in the same sense as in v. 31: "true" legally, so as beyond question to stand as true in any court of law. What Jesus says is that he is offering the Jews a witness of whom he knows that he is legally and in every other way competent. What the Jews will say to this witness and his mighty testimony, whether they, too, will accept it as legally competent Jesus does not here intimate. (Borrow [The interpretation of St. John's gospel](#))

**Wycliffe Bible Commentary** - Another bears witness, even the Father. Unfortunately the Jews do not recognize the Father's witness (cf. Jn 7:28; 8:19), and so are incapacitated for recognizing the support it brings to Jesus' claims (Jn 5:32). (See [The Wycliffe Bible Commentary](#) - no restrictions on NT)

**Pulpit Commentary** - It is a mistake, with Ewald, De Wette, and many others, to suppose that this refers to the testimony of John the Baptist. By Augustine, Hengstenberg, Luthardt, Godet, Meyer, etc., it has been perceived that the "other" (**allos**) **refers to the Father**. Jesus expressly declines to receive John's testimony as his justification or sufficient vindication, and he contrasts it with the higher confirmation which in three distinct ways is already and continuously vouchsafed to him. The present tense, μαρτυρεῖ, is in striking contrast to the testimony of John already silenced by imprisonment or death. The methods of this testimony are subsequently analyzed and described.

**A T Robertson** on **another** - The Father, not the Baptist who is mentioned in Jn 5:33. This continual witness of the Father (ho marturōn] who is bearing witness, and marturei, present active indicative) is mentioned again in Jn 5:36-38 as in Jn 8:17. ([Word Pictures of the New Testament](#))

**NET Note** - To whom does **another** refer? To John the Baptist or to the Father? In the nearer context, Jn 5:33, it would seem to be John the Baptist. But Jn 5:34 seems to indicate that Jesus does not receive testimony from men. Probably it is better to view Jn 5:32 as identical to Jn 5:37, with the comments about the Baptist as a parenthetical digression.

**Matthew Henry** - The Father Himself bore testimony to him (v. 32): There is another that beareth witness. I take this to be meant of **God the Father**, for Christ mentions his testimony with his own (John 8:18): I bear witness of myself, and the Father beareth witness of me. Observe, The seal which the Father put to his commission: He beareth witness of me, not only has done so by a voice from heaven, but still does so by the tokens of his presence with me. See who they are to whom God will bear witness. [1.] Those whom he sends and employs; where he gives commissions he give credentials. [2.] Those who bear witness to him; so Christ did. God will own and honour those that own and honour him. [3.] Those who decline bearing witness of themselves; so Christ did. God will take care that those who humble and abase themselves, and seek not their own glory, shall not lose by it. The satisfaction Christ had in this testimony: "I know that the witness which he witnesseth of me is true. I am very well assured that I have a divine mission, and do not in the least hesitate concerning it; thus he had the witness in himself." The devil tempted him to question his being the Son of God, but he never yielded. ([John 5 Commentary](#))

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**Another** (243)(allos) expresses a numerical difference and denotes "another of the same sort. **Allos** usually means "another of the same kind" while **heteros** denotes "another of a different kind or nature." To say it another way **allos** is **another** numerically but of the same kind in contrast to **heteros** which means another but qualitatively, other, different one.

**W E Vine** has this note on **allos** - **Allos** expresses a numerical difference and denotes "another of the same sort;" **heteros** expresses a qualitative difference and denotes "another of a different sort." Christ promised to send **another** Comforter" (allos, "another like Himself," not heteros), John 14:16. Paul says "I see a **different** law," heteros, a law different from that of the spirit of life (not allos, "a law of the same sort"), Ro 7:23. After Joseph's death "**another** king arose," heteros, one of quite a different character, Acts 7:18. Paul speaks of "a **different** gospel (heteros), which is not **another**" (**allos**, another like the one he preached), Gal. 1:6-7. See heteros (not allos) in Mt. 11:3; Acts 27:1; in Luke 23:32 heteroi is used of the two malefactors crucified with Christ. The two words are only apparently interchanged in 1Co 1:16; 1Co 6:1; 1Co 12:8-10; 1Co 14:17, 19, e.g., the difference being present, though not so readily discernible. They are not interchangeable in 1Co 15:39-41; here **heteros** is used to

distinguish the heavenly glory from the earthly, for these differ in genus, and allos to distinguish the flesh of men, birds, and fishes, which in each case is flesh differing not in genus but in species. **Allos** is used again to distinguish between the glories of the heavenly bodies, for these also differ not in kind but in degree only. **Note:** The distinction (with heteros) comes out in the compounds of **heteros**, viz., heteroglōssos, "strange tongues," 1Co 14:21; heterodidaskaleō, "to teach a different doctrine," 1Ti 1:3; 1Ti 6:3; heterozygō, "to be unequally yoked" (i.e., with those of a different character), 2Co 6:14. ([Online - Vine's Expository Dictionary of Old Testament and New Testament Words](#))

**Gilbrant on allos** - In classical as well as Hellenistic Greek (including Biblical Greek), **allos** functions as both a pronoun ("[the = definite article precedes allos] other [one]") and an adjective ("another [one]"). It can also be used of an "additional" person or thing. Used with the indefinite pronoun tis it can mean "any other." Usually **allos** refers to "another" of the same kind, but on occasion it can refer to "another kind, different" (Liddell-Scott). Further use within these parameters is attested. For the **Septuagint** translators allos was equated with as many as 10 different Hebrew words. On most occasions either 'echādh, "one of, one . . . another . . . a third," 'achēr, or 'ōchārī, "other, different," stands behind it. It was used of God's giving Saul "another" heart (1Sa 10:9) and of the man of God from Judah taking "another" road (1Ki 13:10). Theologically speaking there is and never has been any "other" god but the God of Israel (Isaiah 43:10; cf. 45:21). The term allos appears 160 times in the New Testament. In many instances **allos** and **heteros** have the same meaning and demonstrate significant overlap. On the one hand **heteros** ("other, another,") can express a qualitative difference between the things being compared. While on the other hand, **allos** only signifies a **quantitative difference**, an addition in number. **Allos** usually means "another of the same kind" while heteros denotes "another of a different kind or nature." This distinction is theologically significant, especially in a passage like John 14:15ff. where Jesus promised to send allon paraklēton, that is, a Comforter of the same kind and in addition to himself, not "another" (heteros) of a different kind. Another theologically significant context is Galatians 1:6-9. Here the terms have very different implications. This section in Galatians conveys some of the strongest admonitions and rebukes found in the New Testament. This is because Christians there were being led into "another" (heteros) gospel (verse 6). Paul vehemently warned that this was not "another" (allos) gospel of the same kind which brought them to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ. Instead this heteros gospel was a perversion of the true glad tidings of Christ (verse 7). It was contrary to the one they had first heard Paul preach (verse 8). He went on to pronounce a curse, anathema (329), upon anyone (human or angelic) who would present a gospel different from the one they first received from him. ([Complete Biblical Library](#))

**Allos - 137v another(50), another man(2), another woman(2), another's(1), else(4), more(5), one(3), one another(1), one else(1), other(35), other men(1), other women(1), others(41), some(2), some another(2), someone else(3).** - Matt. 2:12; Matt. 4:21; Matt. 5:39; Matt. 8:9; Matt. 12:13; Matt. 13:5; Matt. 13:7; Matt. 13:8; Matt. 13:24; Matt. 13:31; Matt. 13:33; Matt. 16:14; Matt. 19:9; Matt. 20:3; Matt. 20:6; Matt. 21:8; Matt. 21:33; Matt. 21:36; Matt. 21:41; Matt. 22:4; Matt. 25:16; Matt. 25:17; Matt. 25:20; Matt. 25:22; Matt. 26:71; Matt. 27:42; Matt. 27:61; Matt. 28:1; Mk. 4:5; Mk. 4:7; Mk. 4:8; Mk. 4:18; Mk. 4:36; Mk. 6:15; Mk. 7:4; Mk. 8:28; Mk. 10:11; Mk. 10:12; Mk. 11:8; Mk. 12:4; Mk. 12:5; Mk. 12:9; Mk. 12:31; Mk. 12:32; Mk. 14:58; Mk. 15:31; Mk. 15:41; Lk. 5:29; Lk. 6:29; Lk. 7:8; Lk. 7:19; Lk. 7:20; Lk. 9:8; Lk. 9:19; Lk. 20:16; Lk. 22:59; Lk. 23:35; Jn. 4:37; Jn. 4:38; Jn. 5:7; Jn. 5:32; Jn. 5:43; Jn. 6:22; Jn. 6:23; Jn. 7:12; Jn. 7:41; Jn. 9:9; Jn. 9:16; Jn. 10:16; Jn. 10:21; Jn. 12:29; Jn. 14:16; Jn. 15:24; Jn. 18:15; Jn. 18:16; Jn. 18:34; Jn. 19:18; Jn. 19:32; Jn. 20:2; Jn. 20:3; Jn. 20:4; Jn. 20:8; Jn. 20:25; Jn. 20:30; Jn. 21:2; Jn. 21:8; Jn. 21:18; Jn. 21:25; Acts 2:12; Acts 4:12; Acts 15:2; Acts 19:32; Acts 21:34; 1 Co. 1:16; 1 Co. 3:10; 1 Co. 3:11; 1 Co. 9:2; 1 Co. 9:12; 1 Co. 9:27; 1 Co. 10:29; 1 Co. 12:8; 1 Co. 12:9; 1 Co. 12:10; 1 Co. 14:19; 1 Co. 14:29; 1 Co. 14:30; 1 Co. 15:39; 1 Co. 15:41; 2 Co. 1:13; 2 Co. 8:13; 2 Co. 11:4; 2 Co. 11:8; Gal. 1:7; Gal. 5:10; Phil. 3:4; 1 Thess. 2:6; Heb. 4:8; Heb. 11:35; Jas. 5:12; Rev. 2:24; Rev. 6:4; Rev. 7:2; Rev. 8:3; Rev. 10:1; Rev. 12:3; Rev. 13:11; Rev. 14:6; Rev. 14:8; Rev. 14:9; Rev. 14:15; Rev. 14:17; Rev. 14:18; Rev. 15:1; Rev. 17:10; Rev. 18:1; Rev. 18:4; Rev. 20:12

**Allos in Septuagint** - Gen. 19:12; Gen. 41:3; Gen. 41:6; Gen. 41:23; Exod. 4:13; Exod. 8:10; Exod. 9:14; Exod. 21:10; Exod. 33:5; Lev. 6:11; Num. 23:13; Num. 23:27; Jos. 4:9; 1 Sam. 9:24; 1 Sam. 10:6; 1 Sam. 10:9; 1 Sam. 14:4; 1 Sam. 14:5; 2 Sam. 7:23; 2 Sam. 18:20; 1 Ki. 13:10; 1 Ki. 18:6; 1 Ki. 18:23; 1 Ki. 20:37; 1 Ki. 21:2; 1 Ki. 21:6; 2 Ki. 1:11; 2 Ki. 7:8; 2 Ki. 9:35; 2 Chr. 30:23; 2 Chr. 32:5; Job 1:18; Job 8:19; Job 12:5; Job 15:28; Job 19:27; Job 31:8; Job 37:23; Prov. 5:9; Prov. 7:1; Isa. 26:13; Isa. 43:10; Isa. 45:21; Isa. 45:22; Isa. 49:12; Isa. 65:22; Ezek. 19:5; Dan. 1:13; Dan. 1:15; Dan. 2:39; Dan. 2:41; Dan. 2:44; Dan. 4:10; Dan. 7:5; Dan. 7:6; Dan. 7:8; Dan. 7:20; Dan. 7:24

**Know** (1492) (**eido, oida** - eido is used only in the [perfect tense](#) = oida) keep in mind that it is somewhat difficult to give a crisp, succinct definition of **eido**. That said **eido/oida** means in general to know by perception and is distinguished from **ginosko** (epiginosko, epignosis - the other major NT word group for knowing) because **ginosko** generally refers to knowledge obtained by experience or "experiential knowledge". On the other hand, **eido/oida** often refers more to an intuitive knowledge, although this distinction is not always clear cut. **Eido/oida** is not so much that which is known by experience as an intuitive insight that is drilled into one's heart. **Eido/oida** is a perception, a being aware of, an understanding, **an intuitive knowledge which in the case of believers can only be given by the Holy Spirit.**

## John 5:33 "You have sent to John, and he has testified to the truth."

BGT John 5:33 με ς πρεστ λκατε πρ ς ω ννην, κα μεμαρτ ρηκεν τ ληθε .

KJV John 5:33 Ye sent unto John, and he bare witness unto the truth.

NET John 5:33 You have sent to John, and he has testified to the truth.

CSB John 5:33 You have sent messengers to John, and he has testified to the truth.

ESV John 5:33 You sent to John, and he has borne witness to the truth.

NIV John 5:33 "You have sent to John and he has testified to the truth.

NLT John 5:33 In fact, you sent investigators to listen to John the Baptist, and his testimony about me was true.

NRS John 5:33 You sent messengers to John, and he testified to the truth.

NJB John 5:33 You sent messengers to John, and he gave his testimony to the truth-

NAB John 5:33 You sent emissaries to John, and he testified to the truth.

YLT John 5:33 ye have sent unto John, and he hath testified to the truth.

- **sent:** Jn 1:19-27
- **he:** Jn 1:6-8,15-18,29-34 3:26-36
- [John 5 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

### Related Passages:

John 1:19-17+ (**JOHN THE BAPTIZER**) This is the **testimony** of John, when the **Jews sent to him priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, "Who are you?"** 20 And he confessed and did not deny, but confessed, "**I am not the Christ.**" 21 They asked him, "What then? Are you Elijah?" And he \*said, "I am not." "Are you the Prophet?" And he answered, "No." 22 Then they said to him, "Who are you, so that we may give an answer to those who sent us? What do you say about yourself?" 23 He said, "I am A VOICE OF ONE CRYING IN THE WILDERNESS, 'MAKE STRAIGHT THE WAY OF THE LORD,' as Isaiah the prophet said." 24 Now they had been sent from the Pharisees. 25 They asked him, and said to him, "Why then are you baptizing, if you are not the Christ, nor Elijah, nor the Prophet?" 26 John answered them saying, "I baptize in water, but **among you stands One whom you do not know.** 27 "It is **He who comes after me, the thong of whose sandal I am not worthy to untie.**"

John 1:6-8+ There came a man sent from God, whose name was John. **7He came as a witness, to testify about the Light,** so that all might believe through him. 8 He was not the Light, but he came to testify about the Light.

John 1:34+ "I myself have seen, and **have testified** that this is the Son of God."

John 3:26+ And they came to John and said to him, "Rabbi, He who was with you beyond the Jordan, to whom **you have testified**, behold, He is baptizing and all are coming to Him."

John 5:37 "And the Father who sent Me, **He has testified of Me.** You have neither heard His voice at any time nor seen His form.

## SECOND WITNESS TESTIMONY OF JOHN

**You have sent (apostello) to John** - The **NLT** paraphrases it "In fact, you sent investigators to listen to John the Baptist" as described in the [passage above](#). As discussed above John is not the "**another**" of Jn 5:32 and Jn 5:33 supports the fact that Jesus was not resting His claims upon John the Baptist or any other human being. John was the "forerunner" and his witness was true, but Jesus wanted to make sure that His witness was superior to that of even John, and thus He calls His Father to witness as is made clearer in the following passages. To say it another way, yes John the Baptizer was a witness, but that is not the witness Jesus will rely on.

**A T Robertson** on **you have sent** - Emphatic use of **you** and perfect active indicative of [apostello](#), official and permanent fact and so the witness of the Baptist has to be recognized as trustworthy by the Sanhedrin. The reference is to the committee in Jn 1:19-28. ([Word Pictures of the New Testament](#))

**Steven Cole** - God sent John the Baptist in fulfillment of His promise (Isa. 40:3; Mal. 3:1) to bear witness of Jesus (John 1:6–8, 23). But John was not Jesus' "key witness" in that he was human. Jesus' main witness was the Father. But Jesus mentions John here because for a while the Jews were flocking out to hear him and Jesus wants them to be saved. If they would have believed John's testimony that Jesus was the Lamb of God, sent to take away the sins of the world (Jn 1:29), they would have been saved. John was a lamp, not the light, but he bore witness to the Light. ([The Witnesses to Jesus](#))

**And he has testified** ([martureo](#) in perfect = permanent, abiding value of his testimony) **to the truth** ([aletheia](#)) - **Has testified** is perfect tense which speaks of John's testimony as having enduring effect and impact (it is still resonating today to all who read the Gospels!). Compare with Jn 5:32 where testifies ([martureo](#)) is in the present tense (God continually testifying). In short, Jesus affirms John was a witness of the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth concerning the Christ, the Messiah, Who would later make the declaration that He Himself was **THE TRUTH** (Jn 14:6). So when John testified to the truth, he testified to Jesus Who is the Truth.

**Matthew Henry** - Now the testimony of John was, [1.] **A solemn and public testimony**: "You sent an embassy of priests and Levites to John (Jn 1:19), which gave him an opportunity of publishing what he had to say; it was not a popular, but a **judicial testimony**." [2.] **It was a true testimony**: He bore witness to the truth, as a witness ought to do, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. Christ does not say, He bore witness to me (though every one knew he did), but, like an honest man, He bore witness to the truth. Now John was confessedly such a holy, good man, so mortified to the world, and so conversant with divine things, that it could not be imagined he should be guilty of such a forgery and imposture as to say what he did concerning Christ if it had not been so, and if he had not been sure of it. ([John 5 Commentary](#))

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**Truth** (225) [aletheia](#) from **a** = indicates following word has the opposite meaning ~ without + **lanthano** = to be hidden or concealed, to escape notice, cp our English "*latent*" from Latin = to lie hidden) has the literal sense of that which contains nothing hidden. **Aletheia** is that which is not concealed. **Aletheia** is that which that is seen or expressed as it really is (this idea is discussed more below). The basic understanding of *aletheia* is that it is the manifestation of a hidden reality. For example, when you are a witness in a trial, the court attendant says "Raise your right hand. Do you swear that you will tell the truth and nothing but the truth so help you God?" And you say, "I do" and you sit down. The question the court attendant is asking is "Are you willing to come into this courtroom and manifest something that is hidden to us that only you know so that you will bear evidence to that?" Therefore when you speak the truth, you are manifesting a "hidden reality". Does that make sense? An parallel example in Scripture is the case of the woman in the crowd who had touched Jesus (Read context = Mk 5:24-25, 26-27, 28-29, 30, 31-32), but when she became "aware of what had happened to her, came and fell down before Him, and told Him the whole truth " (Mk 5:33) and nothing but the truth. She did not lie. She spoke no falsehoods. Truth then is the correspondence between a reality and a declaration which professes to set forth or describe the reality. To say it another way, words spoken or written are true when they correspond with objective reality. Persons and things are true when they correspond with their profession (which we describe with words like integrity, sincerity, non-hypocritical, etc). In other words, "what you see is what you get". Hence a truth is a declaration which has corresponding reality, or a reality which is correctly set forth.

**Aletheia in John's writings** - Jn. 1:14; Jn. 1:17; Jn. 3:21; Jn. 4:23; Jn. 4:24; Jn. 5:33; Jn. 8:32; Jn. 8:40; Jn. 8:44; Jn. 8:45; Jn. 8:46; Jn. 14:6; Jn. 14:17; Jn. 15:26; Jn. 16:7; Jn. 16:13; Jn. 17:17; Jn. 17:19; Jn. 18:37; Jn. 18:38; 1 Jn. 1:6; 1 Jn. 1:8; 1 Jn. 2:4; 1 Jn. 2:21; 1 Jn. 3:18; 1 Jn. 3:19; 1 Jn. 4:6; 1 Jn. 5:6; 2 Jn. 1:1; 2 Jn. 1:2; 2 Jn. 1:3; 2 Jn. 1:4; 3 Jn. 1:1; 3 Jn. 1:3; 3 Jn. 1:4; 3 Jn. 1:8; 3 Jn. 1:12

**John 5:34 "But the testimony which I receive is not from man, but I say these things so that you may be saved.**

AMP But the testimony I receive is not from man [a merely human witness]; but I say these things so that you may be saved [that is, have eternal life].

AMPC But I do not receive [a mere] human witness [the evidence which I accept on My behalf is not from man]; but I simply mention all these things in order that you may be saved (made and kept safe and sound).

BGT John 5:34 γ ὁ παρ ἑμοῦ λαμβάνω, ἀλλὰ ταῦτα λέγω ὑμῖν ὅτι ἵνα σωθῆτε.

KJV John 5:34 But I receive not testimony from man: but these things I say, that ye might be saved.



NET John 5:34 (I do not accept human testimony, but I say this so that you may be saved.)

CSB John 5:34 I don't receive man's testimony, but I say these things so that you may be saved.

ESV John 5:34 Not that the testimony that I receive is from man, but I say these things so that you may be saved.

NIV John 5:34 Not that I accept human testimony; but I mention it that you may be saved.

NLT John 5:34 Of course, I have no need of human witnesses, but I say these things so you might be saved.

NRS John 5:34 Not that I accept such human testimony, but I say these things so that you may be saved.

NJB John 5:34 not that I depend on human testimony; no, it is for your salvation that I mention it.

NAB John 5:34 I do not accept testimony from a human being, but I say this so that you may be saved.

Phillips John 5:34 Not that it is man's testimony that I accept—I only tell you this to help you to be saved.

TLB But the truest witness I have is not from a man, though I have reminded you about John's witness so that you will believe in me and be saved.

YLT John 5:34 'But I do not receive testimony from man, but these things I say that ye may be saved;

- **I receive:** Jn 5:41 8:54
- **that:** Jn 20:31 Lu 13:34 Lk 19:10,41,42 Lk 24:47 Ro 3:3 Ro 10:1,21 Ro 12:21 1Co 9:22 1Ti 2:3,4 1Ti 4:16
- [John 5 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passage:

1 John 5:9 If we receive the testimony of men, the testimony of God is greater; for the testimony of God is this, that He has testified concerning His Son.

## JESUS PURPOSE SALVATION FOR HIS HEARERS

**But** - Term of contrast. What is Jesus contrasting?

**TLB** paraphrases it "But the truest witness I have is not from a man, though I have reminded you about John's witness so that you will believe in me and be saved."

**J Vernon McGee** has a helpful comment that "The witness He is referring to here (Jn 5:32) is not John the Baptist. They would immediately think that is the one to whom He is referring, **BUT** He makes it clear that He is not referring to a human witness at all." ([John 5 Commentary](#) or BORROW [Gospel of John Volume 1](#))

**The testimony ([marturia](#)) which I receive ([lambano](#)) is not from man** - **NET** = "I do not accept human testimony" **NLT** = "Of course, I have no need of human witnesses." **NEB** "Not that I rely on human testimony." **JB** "not that I depend on human testimony" In other words Jesus is telling the Jews that He did not rely mainly on the testimony of men, even a prophet as great as John the Baptist.

**Newman** - The force of Jesus' words in this context is not to deny the truth of John's testimony, but rather to affirm that He Himself does not need the testimony of any human being. (USB Handbook on the Gospel of John)

**Blum** - Jesus did not need **human testimony**, but John's work helped people because in their darkness he pointed them to the light. John's work was **that you may be saved**. His great popular movement was only an anticipatory one, in which he pointed to Jesus as the Lamb of God.

**Wycliffe Bible Commentary** - However helpful such witness may have been in leading others to a right evaluation of himself, Jesus did not rely upon it as necessary to His own awareness of person and mission. (See [The Wycliffe Bible Commentary](#) - no restrictions on NT) (IN OTHER WORDS HE DID NOT DEPEND ON HUMAN TESTIMONY.)

**POSB** has an interesting application - Jesus did not need or plead the witness of a mere man. The implication for man is clear: men should not plead the witness of a mere man when dealing with eternal issues that determine their destiny. The testimony of God's Son should be counted the strongest of witnesses, yet tragically men want the testimony of other men just like themselves. (Borrow [The Preacher's outline & sermon Bible](#))

**BUT** - Term of contrast. What is Jesus contrasting? Even though He Himself was not relying on John's testimony, nevertheless [contrast] He reminded the Jews of it because it was a testimony that had the potential to save those who heard it.

**I say these things so that** ([hina](#) - purpose clause) **you may be saved** ([sozo](#) - note passive voice = an external work of God, Father and/or Spirit - cf Jn 6:44, 65+) What are **these things**? In context **these things** refer to John the Baptist's testimony which included such powerful truths as "**Behold** the Lamb of God Who takes away the sins of the world" (Jn 1:29+) or "**Repent** ([present imperative](#) see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)) for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." (Mt 3:2+) **Revised English Bible** gives a good paraphrase "Not that I rely on human testimony, but I remind you of it for your own salvation." Jesus' aim in the defense of His deity was not to win an argument, but to win souls. **So that** ([hina](#) - purpose clause) describes Jesus' purpose -- **you may be saved** and He laments in John 5:40 because of their lack of response. As Jesus has already explained "God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world might be saved through Him." (Jn 3:17+) In sum, we see His love and compassion toward those who hated Him, were persecuting Him and who He knew would soon murder Him. These are words of One who was "full of grace and truth."

"Man of Sorrows" what a name

For the Son of God Who came

Ruined sinners to reclaim

Hallelujah, what a Savior

Hallelujah, what a Savior!

([Play and praise](#) Him)

**THOUGHT** - Have you ever been witnessing to a lost person and you become frustrated with their [specious](#) excuses and so you begin to focus on winning an argument and forgetting you are there to win their soul. Of course we are speaking to "dead" men, so no amount of argument or logic can give life to a dead man. It is only the Spirit Who is able to accomplish the "winning" but He does use a winsome presentation of the Gospel. How would you characterize your Gospel presentation, winsome or winning the argument? Are you sowing seed which the Spirit can use to save their soul? Perhaps you are shy like most of us are (I certainly tend to shy away from presenting the Gospel). If so, let me suggest a little tool you could use to present the Gospel to a dead person. It is a little tract I frequently hand out because it has a question on the front which almost every dead (spiritually) person is interested in -- "[Are You Going to Heaven?](#)" I show them the tract and ask what would they answer. I usually receive one of 3 answers - "I hope so," "I think so," or "I'm sure," (the last usually being a person who is born again and I encourage them to pass the tract on). Then I tell ask them how they "hope" or "think" they will go to heaven? That is where the tract can be very helpful. I tell them on the first page of the tract are 17 reasons people give as evidence that they are going to heaven. I suggest they read these 17 reasons and determine which is the correct answer. The tract then goes through all 17 answers and shows from Scripture why they are all the wrong way to enter Heaven. Then the tract asks "**So what is the only way of salvation?**" And then it presents Jesus as the only Source of salvation and the way to Heaven. [Here is a link to invest in a pack of 25 tracts](#) and then you can pray and ask God to give you opportunities to hand those to men and women who are dead in their trespasses and sins (Eph 2:1+). I can promise you that if you carry out this little "exercise" the result will be joy in your heart. Be sure and ask the person's name and after you part ways, take them to the Lord in prayer. Whether they are saved is in God's hands. But you have been faithful to be His witness in the remotest part of the earth (Acts 1:8+)! Well done, good and faithful servant (Mt 25:21, Lk 19:17+)!

**Matthew Henry** on **so that you may be saved**. This he aimed at in all this discourse, to save not his own life, but the souls of others; he produced John's testimony because, being one of themselves, it was to be hoped that they would hearken to it. Note, First, Christ desires and designs the salvation even of his enemies and persecutors (**ED: WE WERE ALL ONCE HIS ENEMIES!!!** Ro 5:10+). Secondly, The word of Christ is the ordinary means of salvation. Thirdly, Christ in His word considers our infirmities and condescends to our capacities, consulting not so much what it befits so great a prince to say as what we can bear, and what will be most likely to do us good. ([John 5 Commentary](#))

**Kruse** - Jesus did not need John's testimony to establish the truthfulness of his word: *Not that I accept human testimony; but I mention it that you may be saved.* Having the testimony of the Father, Jesus did not need that of John the Baptist. The reason he pointed to John as witness was for the sake of his hearers. If only they would accept John's testimony about him they would be saved. Jesus was holding out to his opponents another opportunity to turn and be saved. (Borrow [The Gospel according to John : an introduction and commentary](#))

**Norman Geisler** on testimony Jesus receives - He did not accept mere human testimony to **establish** Who He was, but He did accept it to **propagate** Who He was. God, by miraculous acts, established Who Jesus was (cf. Acts 2:22; Heb 2:3-4), not human

beings. On the other hand, once humans discovered what God had disclosed, their testimony was valid. Even after Peter's great confession, Jesus reminded him that "*flesh and blood has not revealed this to you*"(Mt. 16:17).

**J C Ryle** - Here, as elsewhere, we should note how our Lord presses home on the Jews the inconsistency of admitting John the Baptist to be a prophet sent from God, while they refused to believe Himself as the Messiah. If they believed John they ought in consistency to have believed Him. (See Matt. 21:23–27.) ([John 5 Commentary](#))

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**Saved** (4982) **sozo** has the basic meaning of rescuing one from great peril. Additional nuances include to protect, keep alive, preserve life, deliver, heal, be made whole. **Sozo** is sometimes used of physical deliverance from danger of perishing (see Mt 8:25; Mt 14:30; Lk 23:35; Acts 27:20, 27:31), physical healing from sickness (Mt 9:21, 22; Mk 5:23, Acts 4:9), and deliverance from demonic possession (Lk 8:36). More often **sozo** refers to **salvation** in a spiritual sense to rescue or preserve from eternal death, from judgment, sin, bring salvation, bring to salvation (active sense = Mt 18:11; Lk 7:50; Jn 12:47; Ro 11:14; 1 Cor 1:21; 7:16; Titus 3:5; Hb 7:25; Jas 4:12; 5:20; 1 Pet 3:21 or passive sense = be rescued or saved, attain salvation = Mt 24:13; Mk 10:26; Lk 13:23; 18:26; Jn 3:17; Jn 5:34; Acts 11:14; 15:1, 11; Ro 8:24; 11:26; 1 Cor. 3:15; 5:5; Eph 2:5, 8; 1 Ti 2:4). Jesus' very Name speaks of His primary purpose to save men from their sin - "She (Mary) will bear a Son; and you shall call His name Jesus, for it is He who will **save** (sozo) His people from their sins." (Mt 1:21±) In Mt 1:21 **sozo** is equated with deliverance from sins (guilt and power of) with Jesus' Name being a transliteration of Joshua meaning "Jehovah is salvation".

**Sozo in John's Gospel** - Jn. 3:17; Jn. 5:34; Jn. 10:9; Jn. 11:12; Jn. 12:27; Jn. 12:47; Acts 2:21;

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**Norman Geisler** - [When Critics Ask](#) - **JOHN 5:34—Did Jesus accept human testimony about who He was?**

**PROBLEM:** In this verse Jesus rejected human testimony about Himself, insisting, "I do not receive testimony from man." But elsewhere He accepted Peter's testimony that He was the Christ, the Son of the Living God (Matt. 16:16–18). In fact, even in this same book (John 15:27) Jesus said to His disciples, "And you also will bear witness, because you have been with Me from the beginning."

**SOLUTION:** The difference in these statements is due to the circumstances of the testimony. He did not accept mere human testimony to **establish** who He was, but He did accept it to **propagate** who He was. God, by miraculous acts, established who Jesus was (cf. Acts 2:22; Heb. 2:3–4), not human beings. On the other hand, once humans discovered what God had disclosed, their testimony was valid. Even after Peter's great confession, Jesus reminded him that "flesh and blood has not revealed this to you" (Matt. 16:17). The matter can be summarized in this way:

**HUMAN TESTIMONY COULD NOT**

Disclose who Jesus was  
Establish who He was  
Prove who He was

**HUMAN TESTIMONY COULD**

Discover who Jesus was  
Disseminate who He was  
Propagate who He was

**John 5:35 "He was the lamp that was burning and was shining and you were willing to rejoice for a while in his light."**

BGT John 5:35 κενοσ ν λχνοσ και μενοσ κα φαων, με ς δ θελσατε γαλλιαθ ναι πρ ς ραν ν τ φωτ ατο .

KJV John 5:35 He was a burning and a shining light: and ye were willing for a season to rejoice in his light.

NET John 5:35 He was a lamp that was burning and shining, and you wanted to rejoice greatly for a short time in his light.

CSB John 5:35 John was a burning and shining lamp, and for a time you were willing to enjoy his light.

ESV John 5:35 He was a burning and shining lamp, and you were willing to rejoice for a while in his light.

NIV John 5:35 John was a lamp that burned and gave light, and you chose for a time to enjoy his light.

NLT John 5:35 John was like a burning and shining lamp, and you were excited for a while about his message.

NRS John 5:35 He was a burning and shining lamp, and you were willing to rejoice for a while in his light.

NJB John 5:35 John was a lamp lit and shining and for a time you were content to enjoy the light that he gave.

NAB John 5:35 He was a burning and shining lamp, and for a while you were content to rejoice in his light.

YLT John 5:35 he was the burning and shining lamp, and ye did will to be glad, for an hour, in his light.

- **was:** Jn 1:7-8 Mt 11:11 Lu 1:15-17, Lk 1:76,77 7:28 2Pe 1:19
- **and:** Jn 6:66 Eze 33:31 Mt 3:5-7 11:7-9 13:20,21 21:26 Mk 6:20 Ga 4:15,16
- [John 5 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passages:

Mark 4:21+ And He was saying to them, "A **lamp** is not brought to be put under a basket, is it, or under a bed? Is it not brought to be put on the lampstand?"

John 1:7-8+ He came as a **witness, to testify about the Light, so that all might believe through him. 8 He was not the Light, but he came to testify about the Light.** (JESUS = Jn 8:12, Jn 9:5, Jn 12:46)

Matthew 11:11+ "Truly I say to you, among those born of women there has not arisen anyone greater than John the Baptist! Yet the one who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.

Luke 1:15-17+ "For he will be great in the sight of the Lord; and he will drink no wine or liquor, and he will be filled with the Holy Spirit while yet in his mother's womb. 16 "And he will turn many of the sons of Israel back to the Lord their God. 17 "It is he who will go as a forerunner before Him in the spirit and power of Elijah, TO TURN THE HEARTS OF THE FATHERS BACK TO THE CHILDREN, and the disobedient to the attitude of the righteous, so as to make ready a people prepared for the Lord."

Jn 1:29+ (JOHN BORE WITNESS) The next day he saw Jesus coming to him and said, **'Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!**

Matthew 3:5-7+ (JEWS "REJOICED" FOR A WHILE OVER JOHN THE BAPTIST) Then **Jerusalem was going out to him, and all Judea and all the district around the Jordan;** 6 and they were being baptized by him in the Jordan River, as they confessed their sins. 7 But when he saw **many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming for baptism,** he said to them, "You brood of vipers, who warned you to flee from the wrath to come?"



### JOHN THE BAPTIST A LAMP REFLECTING THE LIGHT

**He was the lamp ([luchnos](#)) that was burning ([kaio](#)) and was shining ([phaino](#), cp Jn 1:4+)** - Jesus uses the metaphor of John the Baptizer as a bright, burning light in the spiritual darkness that was enshrouding the nation of Israel. He was a **lamp a small portable** whose wick was fed with oil (of the Spirit) to show people walking in spiritual darkness the way, as he reflected the Light of the World so that people could see "the Way, the Truth and the Life" (Jn 14:6).

**Matthew Henry** on John as **the lamp** - He was a light, not [phos](#)—lux, light (so Christ was the light), but [luchnos](#)—lucerna, a luminary, a derived subordinate light. His office was to enlighten a dark world with notices of the Messiah's approach, to whom he was as the morning star. He was a **burning** light, which denotes sincerity; painted fire may be made to shine, but that which burns is true fire. It denotes also his activity, zeal, and fervency, burning in love to God and the souls of men; fire is always working on itself or something else, so is a good minister. He was a **shining** light, which denotes either his exemplary conversation, in which our light should shine (Mt. 5:16), or an eminent diffusive influence. He was illustrious in the sight of others; though he affected obscurity and retirement, and was in the deserts, yet such were his doctrine, his baptism, his life, that he became very remarkable, and attracted the eyes of the nation. ([John 5 Commentary](#))

**A T Robertson** on **the lamp** - The **lamp** in the room (Mark 4:21). Old word for **lamp** or candle as in Matthew 5:15. Used of Christ (the Lamb) as the Lamp of the New Jerusalem (Rev. 21:23). Lampas (Matthew 25:1, 3, etc.) is a torch whose wick is fed with oil. The Baptist was not the Light (to phōs, John 1:8), but a **lamp** shining in the darkness. "When the Light comes, the lamp is no longer

needed" (Bernard). "Non Lux iste, sed lucerna." Jesus by his own claim is the Light of the World (John 8:12; John 9:5; John 12:46). And yet all believers are in a sense "the light of the world" (Matthew 5:14) since the world gets the Light of Christ through us. **Burning** - The lamp that is lit and is burning (present passive participle of kaiō, and so is consumed). **Shining** - See John 1:4 for this verb used of the Logos shining in the darkness. Cf. 1 John 2:8. John was giving light as he burned for those in darkness like these Jews. ([John 5 Commentary](#))

**Wycliffe Bible Commentary** - As **burning**, he gradually faded (Jn 3:30), but as **shining**, he enabled men to see their need of the greater Light (cf. 1:8). As such, his testimony outlived him (**ED**: cf Mt 24:35). (See [The Wycliffe Bible Commentary](#) - no restrictions on NT)

**John Heading** - The Lord described John as a "burning and a shining" oil-lamp, a secondary light indeed when contrasted with the light from heaven. As "burning", John had consuming zeal within; as "shining", he manifested truth outwardly. To start with, the Jews liked this, even when he preached words of judgment since they came out to be baptised; but as soon as he identified Christ, some were offended, leading to his imprisonment and death. But generally, men held "John as a prophet" (Matt 21:26). ([What the Bible Teaches - John](#))

**POSB** - That John's message (witness) was of God could not be questioned by any reasonable and honest person. John definitely showed men the way to God, just as a light shows men the way out of darkness. The people rejoiced in John's light, but only for a season. They looked upon John as a sensation, a moment of excitement, listening and accepting only what they wished. Very simply, if John said anything that did not allow them to do as they desired, they rejected it (Borrow [The Preacher's outline & sermon Bible](#))

**NET Note** - *He was a lamp that was burning and shining.* [Sirach 48:1](#) states that the word of Elijah "burned like a torch." Because of the connection of John the Baptist with Elijah (**ED**: cf Lk 1:17)(see John 1:21+ and the note on John's reply, "I am not"), it was natural for Jesus to apply this description to John.

**And you were willing (thelo) to rejoice (agalliao - be exceedingly joyful, overjoyed) for a while in his light (phos) - NLT =** you were excited for a while about his message." **Amplified** says "to sun yourselves in his light." **Mace NT** says "you were willing to be entertain'd for a while with his light." What does the time phrase **for a while** signify? John the Baptist had given a true witness of Jesus, but for the most part it was rejected (like the prophets of old 2Ki 17:13-14; 2Ch 24:19; Jer 7:25-26; Jer 25:4; Jer 29:19; Jer 44:4-5) and he was probably in prison at this very time (compare past tense - **was burning...was shining**) and would soon have his head lopped off! The window of opportunity for the Jews to believe John was closed. What was John's **light (phos)**? Simply put, it was his preaching. Imagine a man in the wilderness dressed in "a garment of camel's hair, and a leather belt about his waist" shouting "Repent!" They rejoiced that here was the first prophet Israel had seen for 400 years! He was alive **for a while** (for a season) and popular **for a while** (Jn 3:23) and shouted "**Repent**, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Mt 3:2) **for a while**, but his light was transient and soon extinguished (although his message reverberates through the Gospels). As Bernard said "When the Light comes, the lamp is no longer needed."

**THOUGHT** - Who is the lamp today? You are beloved! The lost world receives the Light of Christ through His disciples! Jesus issued a command to us to "**Let** your light **shine** before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven." (Mt 5:16+) Do the lost see your good (God) works? Are they receiving an accurate representation of God the Father Who they cannot see?

**Willaim MacDonald** adds "May each of us who loves the Lord Jesus desire that we, too, may be flames of fire for Him, burning ourselves out but bringing light to the world in the process."

**A T Robertson** on **were willing to rejoice** - "They were attracted by his brightness, not by his warmth" (Bengel). Even so the brightness of John's shining did not really enlighten their minds. "The interest in the Baptist was a frivolous, superficial, and short-lived excitement" (Vincent). It was only "for an hour" (pros hōran) when they turned against him. ([John 5 Commentary](#))

**Matthew Henry** on **rejoice (agalliao)** pictures them as even "willing to dance, and make a noise about this light, as boys about a bonfire"...You were fond of him, pros hōran—for an hour, for a season, as little children are fond of a new thing, you were pleased with John awhile, but soon grew weary of him and his ministry, and said that he had a devil, and now you have him in prison." Many, that seem to be affected and pleased with the gospel at first, afterwards despise and reject it; it is common for forward and noisy professors to cool and fall off (**ED**: SEE Lk 8:6-7, 12-14+). These here **rejoiced in John's light, but never walked in it, and therefore did not keep to it** (**ED**: Like Lk 8:15+); they were like the stony ground. While Herod was a friend to John Baptist, the people caressed him; but when he fell under Herod's frowns he lost their favours (cf Mt 14:3, 6-11) Christ mentions their respect to John, to condemn them for their present opposition to himself, to whom John bore witness. If they had continued their veneration for John, as they ought to have done, they would have embraced Christ. (2.) He mentions the passing away of their respect, to justify God in depriving them, as he had now done, of John's ministry, and putting that light under a bushel. ([John 5 Commentary](#))



**Steven Cole** comments on the witness of John **for a while** - There was a window of opportunity for the Jews to believe John, but now that window had closed. The Jewish leaders were interested in John when he was popular, but they never took his message to heart. They were like a bunch of moths who hovered near the lamp while it was burning, but flitted back into the darkness after it was extinguished. They should have followed the One to whom John had pointed. The lesson is: Don't miss the opportunity to be saved when God is speaking His truth to you through His messenger! Today is the day of salvation! ([The Witnesses to Jesus](#))

**John MacArthur** - Like moths to a lamp, the people flocked excitedly to hear John who, as noted above, was the first prophet in nearly four hundred years. Their excitement peaked when he proclaimed the imminent arrival of the long-awaited Messiah (Mark 1:7–8). But his stern call for personal repentance (Matt. 3:1–2), his stinging denunciation of the nation's hypocrisy (Matt. 3:7; Luke 3:7), and his shocking practice of baptizing Jews (the Jews baptized Gentile proselytes, but regarded fellow Jews as already part of God's kingdom people, and hence not in need of baptism) alienated many of the people. Eventually, John's fearless condemnation of Herod Antipas's unlawful marriage (Mark 6:17–18) led to his arrest and execution. The thrill seekers may have rejoiced temporarily in John's ministry, but they missed its purpose—to point out Jesus as the Messiah. They were superficially drawn to John (cf. those similarly drawn to Jesus in Jn 2:23–25), but they lacked genuine repentance. Ultimately, they turned away from the light of truth that John reflected, because they loved the evil deeds of darkness (Jn 3:19). ([John Commentary](#))

**Stier** remarks,—“Man generally, even a prophet, can only give light by burning, like a lighted candle, until he is burnt out, and his mission on earth ceases. Thus did the Baptist burn, brightly but rapidly.” ([Ryle's Expository Thoughts on the Gospels](#))

**John 5:36 "But the testimony which I have is greater than the testimony of John; for the works which the Father has given Me to accomplish--the very works that I do--testify about Me, that the Father has sent Me.**

BGT John 5:36 γ ὁ χω τ ν μαρτυρ αν με ζω το ω ννου· τ γ ρ ργα ὀ ὀκ ν μοι πατ ρ να τελει σω α τ , α τ τ ργα ποι μαρτυρε περ μο τι πατ ρ με π σταλκεν.

KJV John 5:36 But I have greater witness than that of John: for the works which the Father hath given me to finish, the same works that I do, bear witness of me, that the Father hath sent me.

NET John 5:36 "But I have a testimony greater than that from John. For the deeds that the Father has assigned me to complete—the deeds I am now doing— testify about me that the Father has sent me.

CSB John 5:36 "But I have a greater testimony than John's because of the works that the Father has given Me to accomplish. These very works I am doing testify about Me that the Father has sent Me.

ESV John 5:36 But the testimony that I have is greater than that of John. For the works that the Father has given me to accomplish, the very works that I am doing, bear witness about me that the Father has sent me.

NIV John 5:36 "I have testimony weightier than that of John. For the very work that the Father has given me to finish, and which I am doing, testifies that the Father has sent me.

NLT John 5:36 But I have a greater witness than John-- my teachings and my miracles. The Father gave me these works to accomplish, and they prove that he sent me.

NRS John 5:36 But I have a testimony greater than John's. The works that the Father has given me to complete, the very works that I am doing, testify on my behalf that the Father has sent me.

NJB John 5:36 But my testimony is greater than John's: the deeds my Father has given me to perform, these same deeds of mine testify that the Father has sent me.

NAB John 5:36 But I have testimony greater than John's. The works that the Father gave me to accomplish, these works that I perform testify on my behalf that the Father has sent me.

YLT John 5:36 'But I have the testimony greater than John's, for the works that the Father gave me, that I might finish them, the works themselves that I do, they testify concerning me, that the Father hath sent me.

- **I have:** Jn 5:32 1Jn 5:9,11,12
- **the works:** Jn 3:2 9:30-33 10:25,37,38 11:37 14:10,11 15:24 17:4 Ac 2:22 Mt 11:4
- [John 5 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passages:

Acts 2:22+ "Men of Israel, listen to these words: Jesus the Nazarene, **a man attested to you by God with**

**miracles and wonders and signs which God performed through Him in your midst**, just as you yourselves know—

John 4:34+ Jesus said to them, "My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me and to accomplish ([teleioo](#)) His work.

John 17:4+ (**JESUS FINISHED WORK HIS FATHER HAD GIVEN HIM**) "I glorified You on the earth, **having accomplished** ([teleioo](#)) the work which You have given Me to do.

John 5:20+ "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.

John 3:35+ "The Father loves the Son and has given all things (**INCLUDING THESE GREATER WORKS**) into His hand.

John 10:37-38+ "If I do not do the works of My Father, do not believe Me; 38 but **if I do them, though you do not believe Me, believe the works, so that you may know and understand that the Father is in Me, and I in the Father.**"

Matthew 13:54+ He came to His hometown and began teaching them in their synagogue, so that they were astonished, and said, "Where did this man get this wisdom and **these miraculous powers**?"

1 John 5:9+ If we receive the testimony of men, the testimony of God is greater; for the testimony of God is this, that He has testified concerning His Son.

### **THIRD WITNESS: JESUS' SUPERNATURAL WORKS**

**But** - Term of contrast. What is Jesus contrasting (it's straightforward)?

**The testimony** ([marturia](#)) **which I have is greater than** *the testimony of John* - NIV = "I have testimony weightier than that of John." John's witness was good, but Christ's testimony was greater. Why was it greater? Read on.

**For** ([gar](#) - Term of explanation) - What is Jesus explaining? He is explaining why His works carry more weight than the testimony of John the Baptist.

**The works** ([ergon](#)) **which the Father** ([pater](#)) **has given Me to accomplish** ([teleioo](#))--**the very works** ([ergon](#)) **that I do** ([poieo](#) - present tense - continually)--**testify** ([martureo](#) - present tense) **about Me, that the Father** ([pater](#)) **has sent** ([apostello](#) in perfect tense = permanence of His mission) **Me** - Note the phrase **the works which the Father has given Me** continues to emphasize the theme interwoven throughout John 5 of Jesus' oneness with His Father (e.g., see Jn 5:20). **Accomplish** speaks of Jesus fully carrying out the purpose for which the Father sent Him into the world, the ultimate work being His death on the Cross which was validated by His resurrection from the dead (the greatest sign).

**The very works** ([ergon](#)) **that I do** would include His many miracles including the healing of the lame man here in John 5. Clearly His works would include the fulfillment of many of the **Messianic prophecies** in the Old Testament (there are more than 300 OT prophecies!) which served to confirm He was indeed the long expected Messiah.

Jesus' final work as a Man was His sacrificial fully atoning death on the Cross, recorded by John - "Therefore when Jesus had received the sour wine, He said, "It is **finished** ([tetelestai](#) = [perfect tense](#) of [teleo](#))!" And He bowed His head and gave up His spirit." (Jn 19:30+) And His resurrection from the dead was the evidence that the Father approved of His work and was satisfied with ([propitiated by](#)) His sacrificial offering.

The works that Jesus performed which were to stimulate them to believe in Him, would be the very works that would one day condemn them because they rejected Him (cf Jn 15:24). These works were so great that all who failed to believe in Him were without excuse and in fact would suffer an even greater degree of condemnation at the [Great White Throne](#) judgment (see Mt 11:21-24+)

**Warren Wiersbe on the very works I do** - John selected seven of these "signs" to include in his Gospel as proof that Jesus is the Son of God (John 20:30-31). Jesus made it clear that His works were the works of the Father (John 5:17-20; 14:10). Even Nicodemus had to admit that our Lord's miracles identified Him as "sent from God" (John 3:2). But the Bible also records miracles performed by ordinary men, such as Moses, Elijah, and Paul. Do these miracles prove that they are also sent of God? Yes, they do (see Heb. 2:3-4), but none of these men ever claimed to be the very Son of God. No servant of God able to perform God's mighty works would ever claim to be God Himself. The fact that Jesus made this claim, backed up by His mighty works and perfect life, is

evidence that His claim is true. ([Bible Exposition Commentary](#))

**Bob Utley** - Jesus' actions were fulfillments of OT prophecies about the Messiah. The Jews of His day should have recognized these miraculous signs—healing the blind, feeding the poor, restoring the lame (cf. Isa. 29:18; 32:3-4; 35:5-6; 42:7). The power of Jesus' teachings, lifestyle righteousness, compassion, and mighty miracles (cf. John 2:23; 10:25,38; 14:11; 15:24) bore a clear witness to who He was, where He came from, and Who sent Him. [SPECIAL TOPIC: JESUS IS GREATER THAN...](#) [SPECIAL TOPIC: THE FATHERHOOD OF GOD](#)

**W E Vine** on the **works** - the works clearly are comprehensive not only of those of healing and similar signs but of the impartation of life, affecting the character and conduct of His followers, works accomplished by His teaching (as in the case of the conversion of the Samaritan woman, see Jn 4:34).

**A T Robertson** on **works** - these "works" bear the seal of the Father's approval (John 5:20, 36; John 10:25) and to reject their witness is wrong (John 10:25; John 10:37-38; John 15:24). ([John 5 Commentary](#))

**POSB** - Jesus' works were the Father's works. The Father was the Originator, the Planner, the Overseer of the works. He was the One who had given the works to be done and completed. Note that Jesus claimed to have completed the works perfectly (see Jn. 17:4; 19:30). (Borrow [The Preacher's outline & sermon Bible](#))

**THOUGHT** - Every believer has also been given **works** from the Father! Paul wrote "we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for [good works](#), which God prepared beforehand so that (purpose clause) we would walk in them." (Eph 2:10+) This truth begs the question - are you seeking to identify those [good works](#) prepared for you before the foundation of the world? Or are you "manufacturing" your own works, works that will not stand the "fire" test of 1Cor 3:11-15+? If you do not know those [good works](#) God has pre-prepared and personalized for you, earnestly seek His face (Ps 34:10+; Ps 105:4+) pleading with Him to show you those "good works." If you are sincere, I think He will show you those works, because then when you accomplish them, He receives the glory, not you (Mt 5:16+).

**J Vernon McGee** - Friend, there were not just a half dozen, or even a hundred or two whom He had healed; there were literally thousands of people whom He had healed. It was openly demonstrated. Nobody in that day contradicted the fact that He healed -- he would have been a fool if he had. It is over nineteen hundred years later in a musty library in New York City, thousands of miles removed, that scholars can sit down and write books declaring that they don't believe Jesus performed miracles. But that doesn't prove a thing, friend. His miracles were His credentials. His works bore witness that the Father had sent Him. ([John 5 Commentary](#) or BORROW [Gospel of John Volume 1](#))

**Steven Cole** - When the Jews said to Jesus (Jn 10:24b), "If You are the Christ, tell us plainly," He answered (Jn 10:25), "I told you, and you do not believe; the works that I do in My Father's name, these testify of Me." Later, He said (Jn 15:24), "If I had not done among them the works which no one else did, they would not have sin; but now they have both seen and hated Me and My Father as well." Jesus' miracles gave abundant testimony that He is the Christ, the Son of God...**The Jews never attempted to deny that these miracles had occurred.** Rather, they tried to attribute them to Satan (Matt. 12:22–30) Many skeptics today would deny the possibility of miracles because they have never seen one. I just read a Reader's Digest cover story on "amazing facts" about the human body. The story uses words like "incredible" and "magical" to describe the way the body works. But it never alludes to the Creator. The evidence for miracles is literally right under their noses, but they're blind to see it! ([The Witnesses to Jesus](#)) (Bolding added)

**J C Ryle** - Five things should always be noted about our Lord's miracles. (1.) Their **number**: they were not a few only, but very many indeed. (2.) Their **greatness**: they were not little, but mighty interferences with the ordinary course of nature. (3.) Their **publicity**: they were generally not done in a corner, but in open day, and before many witnesses, and often before enemies. (4.) Their **character**: they were almost always works of love, mercy, and compassion, helpful and beneficial to man, and not mere barren exhibitions of power. (5.) Their **direct appeal** to men's senses: they were visible, and would bear any examination ([John 5 Commentary](#))

**John MacArthur** - Jesus' miracles prompted Nicodemus to confess, "Rabbi, we know that You have come from God as a teacher; for no one can do these signs that You do unless God is with him" (Jn 3:2). John 7:31 records that "many of the crowd believed in Him; and they were saying, 'When the Christ comes, He will not perform more signs than those which this man has, will He?' " Even Jesus' bitter enemies "the chief priests and the Pharisees convened a council, and were saying, 'What are we doing? For this man is performing many signs' " (Jn 11:47). As He did here, the Lord Himself repeatedly pointed to His miraculous works as confirmation of His claim to be the Son of God and the Messiah (cf. Jn 10:25, 37–38; 14:11; Matt. 11:3–5). The gospels record at least three dozen of those miracles, and Jesus performed countless others that Scripture does not record (Jn 20:30). ([John Commentary](#))

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**Accomplish** (5048) **teleioo** related to **teleios** from **telos** = an end, a purpose, an aim, a goal, consummate soundness, idea of being whole) means to accomplish, to carry to consummation, to bring to an end or to the intended goal (telos). The basic meaning of teleios is always that the thing or person so described fully carries out the purpose or the plan for which he or it was purposed and designed. It means to be complete, mature, fully developed, full grown, brought to its end, finished, wanting nothing necessary to completeness or in good working order. It does not mean simply to terminate something but to carry it out to the full finish which is picked up in the translation "perfected". **Teleioo** signifies the attainment of consummate soundness and includes the idea of being made whole. Interestingly the Gnostics used **teleios** of one fully initiated into their mysteries and that may have been why Paul used teleios in this epistle.

**Teleioo - 23v** - Lk. 2:43; Lk. 13:32; **Jn. 4:34; Jn. 5:36; Jn. 17:4; Jn. 17:23; Jn. 19:28**; Acts 20:24; Phil. 3:12; Heb. 2:10; Heb. 5:9; Heb. 7:19; Heb. 7:28; Heb. 9:9; Heb. 10:1; Heb. 10:14; Heb. 11:40; Heb. 12:23; Jas. 2:22; 1 Jn. 2:5; 1 Jn. 4:12; 1 Jn. 4:17; 1 Jn. 4:18

**John 5:37 "And the Father Who sent Me, He has testified of Me. You have neither heard His voice at any time nor seen His form.**

BGT John 5:37 καὶ ὁ πατήρ μου ὁ ἑαυτοῦ μαρτυρῶν περὶ ἐμοῦ, ὅτι φωνῆ αὐτοῦ οὐκ ἠκούσατε οὐδέ εἶδον τὴν ὄψιν αὐτοῦ,

KJV John 5:37 And the Father himself, which hath sent me, hath borne witness of me. Ye have neither heard his voice at any time, nor seen his shape.

NET John 5:37 And the Father who sent me has himself testified about me. You people have never heard his voice nor seen his form at any time,

CSB John 5:37 The Father who sent Me has Himself testified about Me. You have not heard His voice at any time, and you haven't seen His form.

ESV John 5:37 And the Father who sent me has himself borne witness about me. His voice you have never heard, his form you have never seen,

NIV John 5:37 And the Father who sent me has himself testified concerning me. You have never heard his voice nor seen his form,

NLT John 5:37 And the Father who sent me has testified about me himself. You have never heard his voice or seen him face to face,

NRS John 5:37 And the Father who sent me has himself testified on my behalf. You have never heard his voice or seen his form,

NJB John 5:37 Besides, the Father who sent me bears witness to me himself. You have never heard his voice, you have never seen his shape,

NAB John 5:37 Moreover, the Father who sent me has testified on my behalf. But you have never heard his voice nor seen his form,

YLT John 5:37 'And the Father who sent me Himself hath testified concerning me; ye have neither heard His voice at any time, nor His appearance have ye seen;

- **He has testified:** Jn 6:27 8:18 Mt 3:17 17:5
- **You have neither heard :** Jn 1:18 14:9 15:24 Ex 20:19 De 4:12 1Ti 1:17 6:16 1Jn 1:1,2 1Jn 4:12,20
- [John 5 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passages:

John 5:32 "There is another who testifies of Me, and I know that the testimony which He gives about Me is true.

Deuteronomy 4:12, 15, 33 "Then the LORD spoke to you from the midst of the fire; **you heard the sound of words, but you saw no form—only a voice.....**15 So watch yourselves carefully, since you did not see any form on the day the LORD spoke to you at Horeb from the midst of the fire,....33 "Has any people heard the voice of God speaking from the midst of the fire, **as you have heard it**, and survived?"

Deuteronomy 5:24 "You said, **Behold**, the LORD our God has shown us His glory and His greatness, and we have heard His voice from the midst of the fire; we have seen today that God speaks with man, yet he lives.

Numbers 12:8 (**MOSES HEARD AND SAW**) With him (MOSES) I speak mouth to mouth, Even openly, and not in dark sayings, And **he beholds the form of the LORD**. Why then were you not afraid To speak against My servant, against Moses?"

Genesis 32:20, 30 and you shall say, **Behold**, your servant Jacob also is behind us." For he said, "I will appease him with the present that goes before me. Then afterward **I will see his face**; perhaps he will accept me." ....30 So Jacob named the place **Peniel** (FACE OF GOD), for he said, "**I have seen God face to face**, yet my life has been preserved." (SEE [What is the significance of Peniel in the Bible?](#))

Judges 13:21-22+ Now the angel of the LORD did not appear to Manoah or his wife again. Then Manoah knew that he was the angel of the LORD. 22 So Manoah said to his wife, "**We will surely die, for we have seen God.**"

Exodus 24:9-10 (**SAW GOD**) Then Moses went up with Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel, 10 and **they saw the God of Israel**; and under His feet there appeared to be a pavement of sapphire, as clear as the sky itself.

Exodus 33:20-23+ But He said, "**You cannot see My face, for no man can see Me and live!**" 21 Then the LORD said, "**Behold**, there is a place by Me, and you shall stand there on the rock; 22 and it will come about, while **My glory is passing by**, that I will put you in the cleft of the rock and cover you with My hand until I have passed by. 23 "Then I will take My hand away and **you shall see My back, but My face shall not be seen.**"

Matthew 5:8 "Blessed are the pure in heart, for **they shall see God.**

John 14:21 "He who has My commandments and keeps them is the one who loves Me; and he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and **I will love him and will disclose ([emphanizo](#)) Myself to him.**" (See [Angel of the LORD](#))

Matthew 3:17 and **behold**, a voice out of the heavens said, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased."

John 1:18 No one has seen God at any time; the only begotten God who is in the bosom of the Father, He has explained Him.

John 12:28-30 "Father, glorify Your name." Then a voice came out of heaven: "I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again." 29 So the crowd of people who stood by and heard it were saying that it had thundered; others were saying, "An angel has spoken to Him." 30 Jesus answered and said, "This voice has not come for My sake, but for your sakes.

## **THE TESTIMONY OF GOD THE FATHER**

**And** - And is used as a function word to indicate connection or addition especially of items within the same class. What is the "class" in this context?

**The Father ([pater](#)) Who sent Me** - This is the fourth time in this discourse to the Jews that Jesus clearly states He has been **sent** by God His Father which would (or at least should) leave no doubt in the audience of where He claims to be from (Jn 5:23, 24, 30), but unbelief and hardened hearts make one spiritually blind to the truth (THEN AND NOW)!

**He has testified ([martureo](#)) of Me - Testified** is in the perfect tense indicating that the testimony was given at a point in time in the past and it still endures! This speaks of its abiding and indeed even eternal nature (Mt 24:35)! How has the Father **testified** about Jesus? The most glorious and complete testimony is by giving us the Bible, the Word of God, with over 300 **Messianic prophecies** in the Old Testament (including many He had no control over - see Isa 7:14+, Da 9:25+, Micah 5:2+), all of which point indisputably to One Man, Jesus.

**A T Robertson on He has testified** - perfect tense active indicative of *martureō*, the direct witness of the Father, besides the indirect witness of the works. Jesus is not speaking of the voice of the Father at his baptism (Mark 1:11), the transfiguration (Mark 9:7), nor even at the time of the visit of the Greeks (John 12:28). This last voice was heard by many who thought it was thunder or an angel. The language of Jesus refers to the witness of the Father in the heart of the believers as is made plain in 1 John 5:9-10. God's witness does not come by audible "voice" (*phōnēn*) nor visible "form" (*eidos*). Cf. John 1:18; John 6:46; 1 John 4:12.



Akēkoate is perfect active indicative of akouō, to hear, and heōrakate is perfect active indicative of horaō, to see. It is a permanent state of failure to hear and see God. The experience of Jacob in Peniel (Genesis 32:30) was unusual, but Jesus will say that those who have seen him have seen the Father (John 14:9), but here he means the Father's "voice" and "form" as distinct from the Son. ([John 5 Commentary](#))

**You have neither heard His voice at any time nor seen His form**- This verse is somewhat enigmatic in my opinion and not easy to interpret. That said, we know that OT Jews heard God's voice (Read Ex 19:9NLT+, Dt 4:33+). We also have a number of passages that state they saw aspects of His form (of course never His full glory - Ex 33:20-23+) - seen Nu 12:8+, Ex 24:9-10+ and [other passages above](#). We also know that in the synoptics God had spoken at the baptism of Jesus (Mt 3:17), but not in John's Gospel. So what does Jesus mean that the Jews He is addressing **have not heard...nor seen**? One reasonable consideration is that because of the unbelief of His hearers, they did not have spiritual eyes or ears to see or hear Him.

**John MacArthur** has this explanation (linking it with John 5:38) - Jesus' statement, You have neither heard His voice at any time nor seen His form, was a further rebuke to the unbelieving Jews. No one can see God in the full glory of His infinitely holy essence (Ex. 33:20; John 1:18; 1 Tim. 6:16; 1 John 4:12). However there were times, throughout Israel's history, when God audibly or visibly interacted with His people. For example, He spoke to Moses (Ex. 33:11; Num. 12:8), the Israelites of the exodus (Deut. 4:12, 15; 5:5), and the prophets (Heb. 1:1). He also appeared, in some physical manifestation of His presence, to Jacob (Gen. 32:30), Gideon (Jdg. 6:22), Manoah (Jdg. 13:20), and others (Ge 16:13; Ex. 24:9-11; Isa. 6:5). Yet the unbelieving Jews of Jesus' day, who had both the Old Testament Scriptures and the full revelation of God in Jesus Christ (1:18; 14:9; cf. Col. 2:9; Heb. 1:3), did not have God's word abiding in them, for they did not believe Him whom God sent. They refused to listen to Jesus, God's final revelation to mankind (Heb. 1:2). And, in so doing, they displayed their total ignorance of God, since those who reject Jesus cannot know the Father (cf. Jn 5:23; 8:19; 14:6; 15:23). ([John 1-11 MacArthur New Testament Commentary](#))

**Bob Utley** - Jesus was asserting that although the Jews should have known God through the Scriptures and personal experiences in worship, they did not really know Him at all (cf. John 8:43; Isa. 1:1-15; 6:9-10; 29:13; Jer. 5:21). In the OT, seeing Deity was thought to bring death. The only person who spoke to YHWH face to face was Moses and even then the encounter was through the veil of the Cloud. Many have thought that Exod.33:23 contradicts John 1:18. However, the Hebrew terms in Exodus means "after glory," not physical form. [SPECIAL TOPIC: CAN HUMANS SEE GOD AND LIVE?](#)

**Homer Kent** - The voice of the Father had sounded from heaven at the baptism of Jesus (Matt. 3:17). The Father had also testified to the incarnation of His Son through the miraculous events surrounding Jesus' birth. The greatest testimony of the Father regarding the Son was His Word enshrined as the Old Testament Scriptures. Yet the vast majority of Jesus' audiences were **spiritually blind and deaf** to God's presence and His workings, as evidenced by their almost total failure to receive God's own Son. (Borrow [Light in the darkness : studies in the Gospel of John](#))

**J C Ryle** - The expression "not seen His shape," teaches the same great truth we find elsewhere,—viz., that the Father is invisible, and has never been seen by mortal man. He who appeared to Abraham was the Second Person of the Trinity, and not the Father. St. Paul says distinctly of the Father,—“whom no man hath seen, nor can see.” (1 Tim. 6:17.) The idea of artists and painters, when they represent the Father as an aged man, is a mere irreverent invention of their own brains, without the slightest warrant of Scripture. ([John 5 Commentary](#))

**John Heading** - The Father's witness was manifested at the baptism of the Son (Matt 3:17), on the mount of transfiguration (Matt 17:5), and in His words from heaven in John 12:28. But such testimony from on high can only be recognised by **hearts open to the Father's voice**; ([What the Bible Teaches - John](#))

**Steven Cole** - Jesus indicts the Jews for three things (Borrow [Morris, p. 329](#)): (1) "You have [not] heard His voice at any time" (Jn 5:37). Moses had heard God's voice (Exod. 33:11), but Jesus' hearers were not true followers of Moses (Jn 5:46). If they had been true followers of Moses, they would have recognized God's voice in Jesus (Jn 3:34; 17:8). (2) You have not "seen His form" (Jn 5:37b). Jacob saw "the face of God" when he wrestled with the angel (Jesus in preincarnate form), but the Jews were not true sons of Jacob or they would have seen God's form in Jesus (Jn 1:18; 14:9). (3) "You do not have His word abiding in you" (Jn 5:38). Although they studied the Word (Jn 5:39) and many of the rabbis had memorized most of the Word, they had studied it wrongly, because their study had not pointed them to the Word who took on human flesh and dwelt among them (Jn 1:1, 14). ([The Witnesses to Jesus](#))

**William MacDonald** - The **unbelieving Jews had neither heard the voice of God at any time, nor seen His form** This was because they did not have His word abiding in them. God speaks to men through His Word, the Bible. These Jews had the OT Scriptures, but they did not allow God to speak to them through the Scriptures. Their hearts were hardened, and their ears were dull of hearing. They had never seen God's Form or Person because they did not believe on the One whom God had sent. God the Father does not have a Form or Shape that is visible to mortal eyes. He is Spirit and therefore invisible. But God has revealed Himself to men in the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ. In a very real way, those who believed on Christ saw the Form of God.

Unbelievers merely looked upon Him as another man like themselves. (Borrow [Believer's Bible Commentary](#))

**Colin Kruse** - They had not heard his voice because their spiritual ears were closed to his revelation, both in the past and now. There were those in Old Testament times who heard God's voice and had in some sense 'seen' God,<sup>104</sup> but this was not the case with the Jewish leaders of Jesus' day. It is a truism in both the Old Testament and the New Testament, and certainly in the Gospel of John (1:18; 6:46), that no-one has ever actually seen God.<sup>105</sup> While it is possible to interpret Jesus' statement that the Jewish leaders have not seen his form along these lines, it is better to interpret it metaphorically. Their spiritual eyes, like their spiritual ears, were closed. All this was evident, Jesus said, for you do not believe the one he sent. If they were listening to God, they would accept the message he was conveying to them through his Son. (Borrow [The Gospel according to John : an introduction and commentary](#))

**NET Note** - **You people have never heard his voice nor seen his form at any time.** Compare Deut 4:12. Also see Deut 5:24ff., where the Israelites begged to hear the voice no longer—their request (ironically) has by this time been granted. How ironic this would be if the feast is Pentecost, where by the 1st century A.D. the giving of the law at Sinai was being celebrated.

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#### **QUESTION - [Has anyone ever seen God?](#)**

**ANSWER** - "No one has ever seen God" (John 1:18a). This statement refers to the spiritual nature of God. God is spirit (John 4:24a), and so we are naturally limited in perceiving Him. Physical eyes cannot behold spiritual beings.

The Lord Jesus Christ is a unique case: "No one has ever gone into heaven except the one who came from heaven—the Son of Man" (John 3:13). Since He is both the [Son of Man](#) and the [Son of God](#), Jesus knows both the earthly and heavenly realms. He descended from heaven, where "he was with God in the beginning" (John 1:2). Jesus has seen God; in fact, Jesus is the embodiment of all God is: "No one has ever seen God, but the one and only Son, who is himself God and is in closest relationship with the Father, has made him known" (John 1:18; cf. Colossians 2:9).

Because of our physical, moral, and spiritual limitations, God the Father sent His one-and-only Son into the world. Through Jesus Christ, we know God and are redeemed from our sin. If we want to see God, we must look to Jesus. Those who beheld Jesus as He walked this earth were, in a sense, seeing God—not God as a [spirit](#) but God clothed in humanity (John 14:9).

When Moses talked with God at the [burning bush](#), "Moses hid his face, because he was afraid to look at God" (Exodus 3:6). Later, God tells Moses, "You cannot see my face, for no one may see me and live" (Exodus 33:20). In other words, truly seeing God as He is, in the fullness of His glory, is more than any mortal can tolerate (cf. Isaiah 6:5). Moses was allowed a glimpse of God's glory, but, for his own protection, most of God's glory was kept hidden from him (Exodus 33:21–23).

What, then, should we do with other passages that describe various people "seeing" God? For example, in [Exodus 33](#), the same chapter in which Moses *cannot* see God, Moses speaks to God "face to face" (verse 11). In this instance, we must understand the phrase *face to face* as a figure of speech indicating Moses and God were in close communion. They were speaking to each other as if they were two human beings holding a conversation.

There are other times when people *seem* to have seen God:

- In Genesis 32:22–32, Jacob wrestles with someone who is later revealed to be God. When the incident was over and Jacob felt the full import of what had just happened, he was overawed: "So Jacob called the place Peniel, saying, 'It is because I saw God face to face, and yet my life was spared'" (verse 30). However, Jacob did not see God in all His glory, and he did not see God in spirit form. On a purely physical level, Jacob wrestled a theophany, a manifestation of God in human form.
- In Judges 13:1–23, Samson's parents have an interaction with the angel of the Lord. They don't realize they are speaking to the angel of the Lord until the angel performs a sign and ascends to heaven before their eyes. At that point, Samson's father is terrified: "'We are doomed to die!' he said to his wife. 'We have seen God!'" (verse 22). But, as in Jacob's case, they had only seen God appearing as an angel. This is another example of a theophany (or Christophany).
- In Isaiah 6:1–13, Isaiah has a vision of "the Lord, high and exalted, seated on a throne" (verse 1). There are seraphim present, and even they cover their faces in God's presence (verse 2). Isaiah's immediate reaction is fear due to his sin: "Woe to me!" he cries. "I am ruined! . . . My eyes have seen the King, the Lord Almighty" (verse 5). God then atones for Isaiah's sin and commissions him as a prophet. Of note here is that Isaiah is experiencing a prophetic vision; thus, he is not seeing Yahweh, per se, but a symbol of His presence and majesty. Or this could be another Christophany (see John 12:41).

No one has ever seen God, who is "the blessed and only Ruler, the King of kings and Lord of lords, who alone is immortal and who

lives in unapproachable light, *whom no one has seen or can see*. To him be honor and might forever. Amen” (1 Timothy 6:15–16, emphasis added). It is only through God’s only begotten Son, Jesus Christ, that we can approach God, know God, and see God. [GotQuestions.org](http://GotQuestions.org)

### Related Questions from Gotquestions.org

- [If Moses met face to face with God, why, later, was he not allowed to see God’s face?](#)
- [Why was God so evident in the Bible, and seems so hidden today?](#)
- [How should a Christian respond to people who claim, “I saw Jesus”?](#)
- [What is a theophany? What is a Christophany?](#)
- [Did Moses see God?](#)

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### Norman Geisler - [When Critics Ask](#) - JOHN 5:37—Can God’s voice be heard?

**PROBLEM:** Jesus declared to the Jews, “**You have neither heard His [God’s] voice at any time, nor seen His form**” Yet the voice of God was heard many times in the OT (cf. 1Sa 3:4–14), and the Father spoke from heaven three times during Jesus’ earthly ministry (Matt. 3:17; 17:5; John 12:28).

**SOLUTION:** There are a number of interpretations of this passage. First, some claim that Jesus is simply referring to the crowd to whom He is ministering here, thus, not excluding the fact that God’s voice had been heard by others. However, this seems unlikely in view of the sweeping phrase “**at any time**,” as well as the fact that Jesus seems to be addressing the Jewish nation in general which rejected Him (cf. John 1:10–11; 5:39; 12:37).

Second, still others believe Jesus is contrasting their state of knowledge with that of the OT prophets who heard God’s voice and saw His form (manifested in theophanies). If so, their inability to understand it was due to the fact that they were “not willing” to respond to God speaking in and through it (John 5:40).

Third, many scholars hold that this refers to their not heeding God’s unique or inner voice speaking to their hearts, since they were not receptive to His Word (cf. 1 Cor. 2:14). This fits with the fact that they could search the Scripture (John 5:39) and still miss its main message, Christ. In addition, the reference to the Father’s testimony of Him (v. 37) may be a reference to the voice from heaven at Jesus’ baptism, which, like the later voice from heaven (John 12:28), they dismissed as “thunder” (John 12:29).

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### Related Resources:

- Messianic prophecies - on site article
- [Messianic Prophecies](#)
- [Isaiah 53 The Forbidden Chapter](#) - Eitan Bar (Messianic Believer) - interesting
- [Josh McDowell's classic "More than a Carpenter"](#) - good book to suggest to your skeptical friends!
- [Josh McDowell's updated Evidence that Demands a Verdict - includes volume 1 & 2](#) - 817 page pdf - a modern classic!
- [How a Jewish man Michael Goldstone met Messiah - site has multiple similar video testimonies](#) - these are fascinating stories that show God's providence in real time! Very worthwhile viewing! Then send to your unbelieving Jewish friends! We all have them!
- [Messianic Prophecies • WebBible Encyclopedia • ChristianAnswers.Net](#)
- [AccordingtotheScriptures.org -- 353 Prophecies Fulfilled in Jesus Christ - nice simple chart](#)
- [Jesus and messianic prophecy - Wikipedia](#)
- [Messianic Prophecy](#)
- [BEHOLD MY SERVANT A MESSIANIC STUDY OF ISAIAH - 830](#) page by Raymond Miller
- [Messianic Prophecies - Bible.org](#) - J. Hampton Keathley, III
- [Prophecies Concerning Christ](#) - Michael Finlay
- [Prophecies of the Birth of Christ](#) - J. Hampton Keathley, III
- [The Story of the "Seed" - The Coming of the Promised Messiah](#) - Bob Deffinbaugh
- [Prophecies of Jesus Christ as Messiah](#)
- [Chris Tomlin's song Jesus Messiah](#)
- [Messianic Prophecies in Isaiah - 20 part Series by S Lewis Johnson](#)
- [The Messianic Hope of Israel - Series - Max Reich](#)
- [Messianic Prophecy in the Old Testament - Wil Pounds](#)
- [Messianic Prophecies, Types & Applications in the Old Testament - Wil Pounds](#)
- [Numbers 24:15-19 A Star Will Come out of Jacob - Greg Herrick](#)

- [Numbers 24:17-19 Messianic Prophecies - Allen Ross](#)
- [The Amazing Prophecy Of Names - A study of Isaiah's names for the Savior](#)
- [Commentary on Messianic Predictions \(V1-Gen, Ps, Minor Prophets\) - E W Hengstenberg \(Pdf\)](#)
- [Commentary on Messianic Predictions \(V2-Isa, Zeph, Jer\) - E W Hengstenberg](#)
- [The Jewish Tradition Of Two Messiahs - RBC](#)
- [Questions Skeptics Ask About Messianic Prophecy - RBC](#)
- [2 Timothy 3:16-17: Study on Authority of God's Word](#)
- [The Power of God's Word - a simple study](#)
- [The Necessity of Scripture \(Pdf\) - William D. Barrick](#)
- [The Sufficiency of Scripture \(Pdf\) - John MacArthur \(also here\)](#)
- [Rationality, Meaningfulness & Precision of Scripture - Robert L. Thomas](#)
- [The Authority of Scripture \(Pdf\) - Richard L. Mayhue](#)
- [The Testimony of Prophecy by Charles Simeon \(Or \[Here\]\(#\) - scroll down to 2 Peter 1:19\)](#)
- [Prophecies of the Birth of Christ | Bible.org](#)
- [Messianic Prophecies | Bible.org](#)
- [How many prophecies did Jesus fulfill? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- [Is the "The Suffering Servant" prophecy in Isaiah 53 about Jesus? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- [Is "virgin" or "young woman" the correct translation of Isaiah 7:14? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- [Where do the Hebrew Scriptures prophesy the death and resurrection of the Messiah? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- [What are the four Servant Songs in Isaiah? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- [How can I identify messianic prophecies in the Old Testament? | GotQuestions.org](#)

**John 5:38 "You do not have His word abiding in you, for you do not believe Him whom He sent."**

BGT John 5:38 καὶ τὸ ἄλογον ἔχει ἐν ὑμῖν, ὅτι οὐ πιστεύετε ἐν τῷ ἀποστείλαντι ὑμᾶς.

KJV John 5:38 And ye have not his word abiding in you: for whom he hath sent, him ye believe not.

NET John 5:38 nor do you have his word residing in you, because you do not believe the one whom he sent.

CSB John 5:38 You don't have His word living in you, because you don't believe the One He sent.

ESV John 5:38 and you do not have his word abiding in you, for you do not believe the one whom he has sent.

NIV John 5:38 nor does his word dwell in you, for you do not believe the one he sent.

NLT John 5:38 and you do not have his message in your hearts, because you do not believe me-- the one he sent to you.

NRS John 5:38 and you do not have his word abiding in you, because you do not believe him whom he has sent.

NJB John 5:38 and his word finds no home in you because you do not believe in the one whom he has sent.

NAB John 5:38 and you do not have his word remaining in you, because you do not believe in the one whom he has sent.

YLT John 5:38 and His word ye have not remaining in you, because whom He sent, him ye do not believe.

- **have:** Jn 5:42,46,47 Jn 8:37,46,47 Jn 15:7 De 6:6-9 Jos 1:8 Ps 119:11 Pr 2:1,2 Pr 7:1,2 Col 3:16 Jas 1:21,22 1Jn 2:14
- **for:** Jn 5:43 Jn 1:11, Jn 3:18-21, Jn 12:44-48 Isa 49:7 Isa 53:1-3
- [John 5 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passages:

John 8:37; 46; 47 "I know that you are Abraham's descendants; yet you seek to kill Me, because My word has no place in you.....46 "Which one of you convicts Me of sin? If I speak truth, why do you not believe Me?....47 "He who is of God hears the words of God; for this reason **you do not hear them**, because you are not of God."

John 1:11 He came to His own, and those who were His own **did not receive Him**.

John 3:18-21 "He who believes in Him is not judged; he who does not believe has been judged already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. 19 "This is the judgment, that the Light has come into the world, and **men loved the darkness rather than the Light**, for their deeds were evil. 20 "For everyone who does evil **hates the Light**, and does not come to the Light for fear that his deeds will be exposed. 21 "But he who practices the truth comes to the Light, so that his deeds may be manifested as having been wrought in God."

John 12:44-48 And Jesus cried out and said, "He who believes in Me, does not believe in Me but in Him who sent Me. 45 "He who sees Me sees the One who sent Me. 46 "I have come as Light into the world, so that everyone who believes in Me will not remain in darkness. 47 "**If anyone hears My sayings and does not keep them, I do not judge him; for I did not come to judge the world, but to save the world. 48 "He who rejects Me and does not receive My sayings, has one who judges him; the word I spoke is what will judge him at the last day.**

## **UNBELIEF LEADS TO SPIRITUAL BLINDNESS AND DEAFNESS!**

**You do not have His word (logos) abiding (meno) in you** - The sad paradox is that the Jews had the Old Testament Scriptures, but they did not have the Scriptures abiding or at home in their hearts. This explains why they could neither hear His voice or see His form in Jn 5:37! As Jesus stated later in John "He who is **of God** hears the words of God; for this reason **you do not hear them**, because you are not **of God**." (Jn 8:47) In short, these Jews were not of God and He goes on to explain in the next clause why they were not of God.

**Bob Utley** - "His word abiding in you" These are two powerful images in John's writings. God's word (logos) must be received; once received (cf. John 1:12) it must remain (abide, cf. John 8:31; 15:4,5,6,7,10; 1 John 2:6,10,14,17,24,27,28; 3:6,14,15,24). Jesus is God's full revelation (cf. John 1:1-18; Phil. 2:6-11; Col. 1:15-17; Heb. 1:1-3). Salvation is confirmed by a continuing relationship (Hebrew sense of "know" cf. Gen. 4:1; Jer. 1:5) and the affirmation of gospel truths (Greek sense of "know" cf. 2 John 9). This term "abiding" is used in the sense of intimate, personal relationship with perseverance. Abiding is a condition of true salvation (cf. John 15) It is used in several senses in John. (1) the Son in the Father (cf. John 10:38; 14:10,11,20,21; 17:21), (2) the Father in the Son (cf. John 10:38; 14:10,11,21; 17:21,23), (3) believers in the Son (cf. John 14:20,21; 15:5; 17:21), (4) believers in the Son and the Father (cf. John 14:23), (5) believers in the word (cf. John 5:38; 8:31; 15:7; 1 John 2:14)

**For** - (Term of explanation). What is Jesus explaining?

**You (ABSOLUTELY) do not believe (pisteuo) Him (JESUS) Whom He (THE FATHER) sent (apostello)** - Jesus explains the root cause of their spiritual blindness and deafness -- UNBELIEF! They did **not believe** in Yeshua, their very own Messiah, standing in the midst! This is interesting because in a sense Jesus is giving us a descriptive definition of what it means to abide, in this case referring to God's Word abiding in us. How does it abide in us? We have to believe in Jesus, the Living Word, Who the Father sent on His great rescue mission! If we believe in Jesus, we have the Father's Word **abiding** in us, living in us, at home in our heart. **Sent (apostello)** is **consumative** aorist emphasizing the completion of the fact that he is already here.

**J C Ryle** - This verse seems meant to remind the Jews that with all their pretended reverence for God, and affected zeal against blasphemies of Him, they were really ignorant of God's mind. Their reverence for Him was only a form. Their zeal for Him was a blind fanaticism. They knew no more of His mind than of His shape or voice. They were not acquainted with His Word. It did not dwell in their hearts and guide their religion. They proved their own ignorance by not believing Him whom the Father had sent. Had they really been familiar with the writings of the Old Testament they would have believed. Our Lord evidently implies that real knowledge of God's Word will always lead a man to faith in Christ. Where there is no faith we may rightly assume the Bible is either not read, or read in a wrong spirit. Ignorance and unbelief will go together. ([John 5 Commentary](#))

**John 5:39 "You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; it is these that testify about Me;**

BGT John 5:39 ραυν τε τ ς γραφ ς, τι με ς δοκε τε ν α τα ς ζω ν α νιον χειν· κα κε να ε σιν α μαρτυρο σαι περ μο ·

KJV John 5:39 Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me.

NET John 5:39 You study the scriptures thoroughly because you think in them you possess eternal life, and it



is these same scriptures that testify about me,

CSB John 5:39 You pore over the Scriptures because you think you have eternal life in them, yet they testify about Me.

ESV John 5:39 You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is they that bear witness about me,

NIV John 5:39 You diligently study the Scriptures because you think that by them you possess eternal life. These are the Scriptures that testify about me,

NLT John 5:39 "You search the Scriptures because you think they give you eternal life. But the Scriptures point to me!

NRS John 5:39 "You search the scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is they that testify on my behalf.

NJB John 5:39 You pore over the scriptures, believing that in them you can find eternal life; it is these scriptures that testify to me,

NAB John 5:39 You search the scriptures, because you think you have eternal life through them; even they testify on my behalf.

YLT John 5:39 'Ye search the Writings, because ye think in them to have life age-during, and these are they that are testifying concerning me;

- **Search:** Jn 5:46 Jn 7:52 De 11:18-20 17:18,19 Jos 1:8 Ps 1:2 119:11,97-99 Pr 6:23 8:33,34 Isa 8:20 34:16 Jer 8:9 Mt 22:29 Mk 12:10 Lu 16:29,31 Ac 8:32-35 17:11 Ro 3:2 Col 3:16 2Ti 3:14-17 2Pe 1:19-21
- **think:** De 32:47 Ps 16:11 21:4 36:9 133:3 Da 12:2 Mt 19:16-20 Lu 10:25-29 Heb 11:16,35
- **these:** Jn 5:32,36 Jn 1:45 De 18:15,18 Ac 26:22,23,27 Ro 1:2 1Pe 1:10,11 Rev 19:10
- [John 5 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passages:

1 Peter 1:11 seeking to know what person or time the Spirit of Christ within them was indicating as He predicted the sufferings of Christ and the glories to follow.

Deuteronomy 18:15+ "The LORD your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your countrymen, you shall listen to him.

Deuteronomy 18:18+ 'I will raise up a prophet from among their countrymen like you, and I will put My words in his mouth, and he shall speak to them all that I command him.

John 7:52 (WHAT HUBRIS!) They (UNBELIEVING JEWS) answered him, "You are not also from Galilee, are you? Search, and see that no prophet arises out of Galilee."

John 1:45 (THESE TESTIFY ABOUT JESUS) Philip found Nathanael and \*said to him, **We have found Him of whom Moses in the Law and also the Prophets wrote**—Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph."

John 2:22 (THESE TESTIFY ABOUT JESUS) So when He was raised from the dead, His disciples remembered that He said this; and **they believed the Scripture** and the word which Jesus had spoken.

John 3:10 (THESE TESTIFY ABOUT JESUS) Jesus answered and said to him, "Are you the teacher of Israel and **do not understand these things?**

John 5:45-46 (THESE TESTIFY ABOUT JESUS) "Do not think that I will accuse you before the Father; **he one who accuses you is Moses**, in whom you have set your hope. 46 "For if you believed Moses, you would believe Me, for **he wrote about Me.**

John 20:9 (THESE TESTIFY ABOUT JESUS) For as yet they did not understand **the Scripture**, that He must rise again from the dead.

**SEARCH THE SCRIPTURES  
THAT TESTIFY ABOUT JESUS**

**Steven Cole** - Jesus' words in Jn 5:39–40 show that it is possible to study the Scriptures in the wrong way. If you approach the Scriptures from an academic perspective only, it can lead to tragic results. It can fill you with intellectual pride about how you know more than others. It can lead you to the false hope that you have eternal life because of your great knowledge. ([The Witnesses to Jesus](#))

**You search** ([ereunao](#)) **the Scriptures** ([graphe](#)) **because** (term of explanation - What does Jesus explain?) **you think** (suppose - [dokeo](#)) **that in them you have eternal** ([aiionios](#)) **life** ([zoe](#)) - **You** refers to the Jewish leaders who were listening. **Search** is in the present tense indicating they did this continually (see picture above). Note that some think search is better interpreted as a command for them to Search! (see [Ryle below](#)) Their problem was not ignorance but arrogance! The **Scriptures** in context (NT was not yet written) refer to the entire Old Testament. Notice the phrase **you think** - in other words they thought since they searched the Scriptures, that assured them eternal life! On one hand they thought correctly, but that life is coupled with belief of the Scriptures, not mere rote reading, however zealous one is in reading. If you do not believe (and obey) what you read, you are utterly and completely deceived! (cf Jas 1:22+). They founded their faith on what they did (works) rather than what Christ finished on the Cross! Woe! They were like modern day church goers who think they are saved and secure eternally because they have made a profession of Christ, but they have never truly experienced a possession of Christ by grace through faith. These are those who will one day sadly hear Jesus' frightening words in Mt 7:21-23+. Have you made a profession of Christ but lack genuine possession of Christ? (See [What is a profession of faith?](#) [How can I have assurance of my salvation?](#) [What are some of the signs of genuine saving faith?](#) [If you doubt your salvation, does that mean you are not truly saved?](#) [What if I don't feel saved?](#) [Can a person believe in some sense but not be saved?](#)) **Eternal life** is only found in the Person of Christ, not the words about the Person! As John wrote in his epistle "And the testimony is this, that God has given us eternal life, and **this life is in His Son.**" (1 Jn. 5:11+)

**THOUGHT** - "**Search**" (whether indicative or imperative) means much more than just "read" the Scriptures, but dig into them, devour them, "eat" them, desire them more than your necessary food (Job 23:12+)! This begs the question how do you (I) interact with the Living and Active Word of Truth and Life? Do you zip through your morning devotional so you can check off the box ("Done that one!")? Are you do dig into the text as if your very life depended on it (Mt 4:4+, Dt 32:47+)? Beloved, if you have never considered inductive Bible study, I strongly encourage you to do so as you will begin to gather the tools to allow you to truly "**search**" the breadth and length and height and depth of God's eternal Word.

**D A Carson** notes that "The verb rendered '**diligently study**' (search) corresponds to the Hebrew verb [darash](#), a technical term used to refer to their study and exposition of the Bible and of 'oral Torah', the body of oral traditions that had also come down to them. But Jesus points out that their primary motivation in such diligent study was the hope of final acceptance by God.

**John MacArthur** - The Pharisees in particular were fanatical in their preoccupation with Scripture, studying every line, every word, and even the letters in an empty effort to understand the truth. ([John MacArthur New Testament Commentary](#))

The **Mishnah** says "the more study of the Law the more **life**" ("*Lots of Torah, lots of life*")...If a man has gained a good name he has gained [somewhat] for himself; if he has gained for himself words of the Law he has gained for himself **life** in the world to come." ([mishnah Pirkei 'Avot. 2:7](#)) ( [What is the Mishnah? What is a midrash?](#))

**W E Vine** - the great point is that, while the Scriptures were theirs for their guidance, they were so out of touch with the mind of God therein revealed, that they failed to grasp their purport, that, namely of witnessing to Christ. They imagined that they had life simply by their possession of the Word of God, by their devotion to the letter of the Law, and by a formal perusal of the Scriptures, the real and divine purpose of which is to lead the reader to the lifegiver.

**Matthew Henry** - It was a common but corrupt saying among them, *He that has the words of the law has eternal life*, they thought they were sure of heaven if they could say by heart, or rather by rote, such and such passages of scripture as they were directed to by the tradition of the elders. (ED: I KNOW THE STORY OF A MAN WHO MEMORIZED ALL THE PSALMS IN ORIGINAL HEBREW BUT ADMITTED HE WAS AN ATHEIST!). ([John 5 Commentary](#))

**THOUGHT**- How sad to see folks like Andy Stanley say we must "unhitch" from the Old Testament! My suggestion? **Unhitch** from this genre of dangerous teaching! We must take Paul's approach in these last days when popular teachers tickle ears by teaching unbiblical doctrines (2Ti 4:3-4+) "for (Paul) did not shrink from declaring to you **all the counsel of God!**" (Acts 20:27KJV+). And Paul also supported the use of the OT with the truth that "**ALL** Scripture (Old and New) is inspired by God and **PROFITABLE** profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; so that (PURPOSE OF THE OLD AND THE NEW!!!) the man (woman) of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work." (2Ti 3:16-17+) If you **UNHITCH** the Old from the New, your chances of being adequate and equipped for every good work will be markedly diminished!

We must not rest content with having given a superficial reading to a chapter or two, but with the candle of the Spirit we must deliberately seek out the hidden meaning of the word.

-- C H Spurgeon

**Matthew Henry** - "You search the scriptures, and you do well to do so; you read them daily in your synagogues, you have rabbies, and doctors, and scribes, that make it their business to study them, and criticize upon them." The Jews boasted of the flourishing of scripture-learning in the days of Hillel, who died about twelve years after Christ's birth, and reckoned some of those who were then members of the sanhedrim the beauties of their wisdom and the glories of their law; and Christ owns that they did indeed search the scriptures, but it was in search of their own glory: "You search the scriptures, and therefore, if you were not wilfully blind, you would believe in me." Note, It is possible for men to be very studious in the letter of the scripture, and yet to be strangers to the power and influence of it. ([John 5 Commentary](#))

**THOUGHT** - All those who would find Christ must search the scriptures; not only read them, and hear them, but search them, which denotes, 1. Diligence in seeking, labour, and study, and close application of mind. 2. Desire and design of finding. We must aim at some spiritual benefit and advantage in reading and studying the scripture, and often ask, "What am I now searching for?" We must search as for hidden treasures (Prov. 2:4), as those that sink for gold or silver, or that dive for pearl, Job 28:1-11. This ennobled the Bereans, Acts 17:11. (Matthew Henry)

**Utley** - Here is the tragedy of the Jewish leaders: they had the Scriptures, read them, studied them, memorized them, and yet missed the person to whom they point! Without the Spirit, even the Scriptures are ineffective! True life comes only through a personal, obedient faith relationship (i.e., Deut. 4:1; 8:13; 30:15-20; 32:46-47).



**It is these** (OT Scriptures) **that testify** ([martureo](#) - present tense - continually testify) **about Me** - The **Scriptures** continue to witness to the claims of Christ. The Old Testament is like a witness on the stand taking his finger and pointing to Jesus, the One about Whom the Scriptures bear powerful testimony! See [Messianic Prophecies](#) above. The Jews knew that the Old Testament testified of their Messiah!

*To study the Scriptures and miss the Messiah  
is to miss the major purpose of the Scriptures!*

**THOUGHT** - Jesus' words stand as a warning to all who would study the Scriptures for knowledge sake but not for their soul's sake (to see the Savior). Not only will such an approach take you to eternal punishment but will give you a greater degree of punishment for you will be held accountable for the amount of true spiritual light you rejected! ([Are there different levels of punishment in hell?](#)) Like I like to tell the men I disciple "We are not studying the Scriptures so you can be a smarter sinner, but that you will be more like your Savior!"

**ILLUSTRATION** - (EXAMPLE OF KNOWING THE WRITTEN LOGOS BUT NOT KNOWING THE TRUE LOGOS!) While studying in the Holy Lands, a seminary professor of mine met a man who claimed to have memorized the Old Testament--in Hebrew! Needless to say, the astonished professor asked for a demonstration. A few days later they sat together in the man's home. "Where shall we begin?" asked the man. "Psalm 1," replied my professor, who was an avid student of the psalms. Beginning with Psalm 1:1, the man began to recite from memory, while my professor followed along in his Hebrew Bible. For two hours the man continued word for word without a mistake as the professor sat in stunned silence. **When the demonstration was over, my professor discovered something even more astonishing about the man--he was an atheist!** Here was someone who knew the Scriptures better than most Christians ever will, and yet he didn't even believe in God. (Jack Kuhatschek, [BORROW Taking The Guesswork Out of Applying The Bible](#), IVP, 1991, p. 16.) And of course the devil has memorized Scripture (which he used on Jesus in the wilderness temptation) but it has no impact on him!

**Utley** - **THESE** refers to the OT Scriptures, which Jesus fulfills (i.e., John 1:45; 2:22; 5:46; 12:16,41; 19:28; 20:9). Most of the early sermons of Peter (cf. Acts 3:18; 10:43) and Paul (cf. Acts 13:27; 17:2-3; 26:22-23,27) in Acts use fulfilled prophecy as an evidence of Jesus' Messiahship. Jesus clearly saw Himself as the fulfillment and goal (and proper interpreter, cf. Matt. 5:17-48) of the OT.

**MacDonald** - It is terrible to think that men with the Scriptures in their hands could be so blind. But it was even more inexcusable that after the Lord Jesus spoke to them in this way, they still refused to accept Him (Borrow [Believer's Bible Commentary](#))

After Jesus was resurrected He explained to His disciples (they had believing hearts and could see and hear these truths) the OT passages that referred to Him

Then **beginning with Moses** and with all the prophets, He explained to them the things concerning Himself in all the Scriptures....44 Now He said to them, "These are My words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that **all things which are written about Me in the Law of Moses** and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled." (Luke 24:27, 44+)

**J C Ryle** - Some, as Cyril, Erasmus, Ecolampadius, Beza, Brentius, Piscator, Camero, Poole, Toletus, Lightfoot, Lampe, Bengel, Doddridge, Bloomfield, Tholuck, A. Clark, Scholefield, Barnes, Burgon, D. Brown, Webster, think that our Lord spoke in the indicative mood, simply making an assertion,—“Ye do search.” Some, as Chrysostom, Augustine, Theophylact, Euthymius, Luther, Calvin, Cartwright, Gualter, Grotius, Rollock, Ferus, Calovius, Jansenius, Cocceius, Barradius, Musculus, Nifanius, Maldonatus, Cornelius á Lapide, Leigh, Whitby, Hammond, Stier, Alford, Wordsworth, think that He spoke in the imperative mood, giving a command,—“Search,”—as our version gives it. I decidedly prefer this latter view. It is more forcible, and more in keeping with our Lord's general style of address. Above all it seems to me to agree far better with the context. Our Lord had told the Jews that His Father had borne witness of Him, though not by audible voice, nor by visible apparition. How then had He borne witness? They would find it in His Word. “Go and search your own Scriptures,” our Lord seems to say. “Examine them, and become really acquainted with their contents; you will find that they testify clearly and distinctly of Me. If you wish to know God the Father's testimony to Me, search the Scriptures.”....Let us note further what a plain duty it is to read the Scriptures. Men have no right to expect spiritual light if they neglect the great treasury of all light. If even of the Old Testament our Lord said, “Search,” “it testifies of me,” how much more is it a duty to search the whole Bible! An idle neglect of the Bible is one secret of the ignorant formal Christianity which is so widely prevalent in these latter days. God's blessing on a diligent study of the Scripture is strikingly illustrated in the case of the Bereans. (Acts 17:11.) ([John 5 Commentary](#))

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**NET Note** - In them you possess eternal life. Note the following examples from the rabbinic tractate [Pirque Avot](#) (“[The Sayings \[Ethics\] of the Fathers](#)”): Pirque Avot 2:8, “**He who has acquired the words of the law has acquired for himself the life of the world to come**”;

Comment: Here are other quotes from Pirque Avot

- *"All Israel have a share in the World To Come (Attached note = a) the afterlife; b) the Era of the Resurrection of the Dead), as it is stated (Isaiah 60:21)." ([Pirque Avot 6](#))*
- *"Great is Torah, for it gives life to its observers in this world, and in the World To Come. As is stated (Proverbs 4:22): "For they are life to he who finds them, and a healing to all his flesh." ([Pirque Avot 6:7](#))*

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**Search** (2045) [ereunao](#) the root word of **exereunao** in the previous verse) means to make thorough examination, to make a careful or thorough effort to learn something. To search minutely and diligently. It means to search, examine, investigate, inquire, find out. In short, ereunao connotes the activity of examining, investigating, studying to determine the meaning. Ereunao is a Hebrew technical term used by the rabbis and in the Qumran literature for the study of the Scripture (Sir. 17:11; Sirach 45:5; Bar. 4:1; Pss. Sol. 14:1f)

**Ereunao** - 6v - search(2), searches(3), seeking to know(1) - Jn. 5:39; Jn. 7:52; Rom. 8:27; 1 Co. 2:10; 1 Pet. 1:11; Rev. 2:23

The related verb **exereunao** (not in NT) is used 5x in Ps 119 for observe Ps. 119:2; Ps. 119:34; Ps. 119:69; Ps. 119:115; Ps. 119:129; and for search in Pr 2:4 = If you seek her (WISDOM) as silver And **search** (exereunao) for her as for hidden treasures;

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**C H Spurgeon - Morning and Evening** - Jesus Christ is the Alpha and Omega of the Bible. He is the constant theme of its sacred pages; from first to last they testify of him. At the creation we at once discern him as one of the sacred Trinity; we catch a glimpse of him in the promise of the woman's seed; we see him typified in the ark of Noah; we walk with Abraham, as he sees Messiah's day; we dwell in the tents of Isaac and Jacob, feeding upon the gracious promise; we hear the venerable Israel talking of Shiloh; and in the numerous types of the law, we find the Redeemer abundantly foreshadowed. Prophets and kings, priests and preachers, all look one way—they all stand as the cherubs did over the ark, desiring to look within, and to read the mystery of God's great propitiation. Still more manifestly in the New Testament we find our Lord the one pervading subject. It is not an ingot here and there, or dust of gold thinly scattered, but here you stand upon a solid floor of gold; for the whole substance of the New Testament is Jesus crucified,

and even its closing sentence is jewelled with the Redeemer's name. We should always read Scripture in this light; we should consider the word to be as a mirror into which Christ looks down from heaven; and then we, looking into it, see his face reflected as in a glass-darkly, it is true, but still in such a way as to be a blessed preparation for seeing him as we shall see him face to face. This volume contains Jesus Christ's letters to us, perfumed by his love. These pages are the garments of our King, and they all smell of myrrh, and aloes, and cassia. Scripture is the royal chariot in which Jesus rides, and it is paved with love for the daughters of Jerusalem. The Scriptures are the swaddling bands of the holy child Jesus; unroll them and you find your Saviour. The quintessence of the word of God is Christ.

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**C H Spurgeon - Morning and Evening** - The Greek word here rendered **search** signifies a strict, close, diligent, curious search, such as men make when they are seeking gold, or hunters when they are in earnest after game. We must not rest content with having given a superficial reading to a chapter or two, but with the candle of the Spirit we must deliberately seek out the hidden meaning of the word. Holy Scripture requires searching-much of it can only be learned by careful study. There is milk for babes, but also meat for strong men. The rabbis wisely say that a mountain of matter hangs upon every word, yea, upon every title of Scripture. Tertullian exclaims, "I adore the fulness of the Scriptures." No man who merely skims the book of God can profit thereby; we must dig and mine until we obtain the hid treasure. The door of the word only opens to the key of diligence. The Scriptures claim searching. They are the writings of God, bearing the divine stamp and [imprimatur](#)- who shall dare to treat them with levity? He who despises them despises the God who wrote them (ED: I WOULD SUBMIT THIS GOES FOR UNHITCHING THE OLD TESTAMENT!). God forbid that any of us should leave our Bibles to become swift witnesses against us in the great day of account. The word of God will repay searching. God does not bid us sift a mountain of chaff with here and there a grain of wheat in it, but the Bible is winnowed corn-we have but to open the granary door and find it. Scripture grows upon the student. It is full of surprises. Under the teaching of the Holy Spirit, to the searching eye it glows with splendour of revelation, like a vast temple paved with wrought gold, and roofed with rubies, emeralds, and all manner of gems. No merchandise like the merchandise of Scripture truth. Lastly, the Scriptures reveal Jesus: "They are they which testify of me." No more powerful motive can be urged upon Bible readers than this: he who finds Jesus finds life, heaven, all things. Happy he who, searching his Bible, discovers his Saviour.

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#### **QUESTION - [What is bibliolatry?](#)**

**ANSWER** - The term *bibliolatry* comes from combining the Greek words for *Bible* and *worship*. In a Christian context, simply stated, bibliolatry is the worship of the Bible. Typically, the accusation of bibliolatry is used as an attack on those who hold to the inerrancy, infallibility, and supremacy of Scripture. It is often employed as an inflammatory and derogatory attack on believers who hold to "sola scriptura" and/or a literal interpretation of the Bible.

It is important to note that the charge of bibliolatry does not claim some Christians literally bow down before a Bible and worship it, as if it were an idol. While there may be some strange cult out there that literally worships the Bible, that is not what bibliolatry is referring to. The accusation of bibliolatry is that some Christians elevate the Bible to the point that it is equal with God, or to the point that studying the Bible is more important than developing a personal and intimate relationship with Jesus Christ. Is the charge of bibliolatry accurate?

First, it is important to understand what the Bible says about itself. 2 Timothy 3:16-17 declares, "All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work." So, if the Bible is "God-breathed," and "God does not lie" (Titus 1:2), then every word in the Bible must be true. Believing in an inerrant, infallible, and authoritative Bible is not bibliolatry. Rather, it is simply believing what the Bible says about itself. Further, believing what the Bible says about itself is in fact worshipping the God who breathed out His Word. Only a perfect, infallible, omnipotent, omnipresent, and omniscient God could create written revelation that is itself perfect and infallible.

Do some believers emphasize the Bible to the point that other things of importance—such as tradition, nature, reason, and experience—are neglected? Yes. However, the Bible, based on what it says about itself, must be a higher authority than any of these and must, in fact, be the authority against which they are judged. God would never contradict Himself by revealing something in nature, reason, or experience that disagrees with what He revealed in His Word. The Bible is not to be worshiped, but the God of the Bible is to be worshiped. To ignore what God has revealed about Himself in His Word and instead elevate the subjective "revelations" of nature, reason, and experience is idolatry (Romans 1:18-25).

The Bible is not God. The Bible does not contain all of God's knowledge. While the Bible gives principles that apply to every situation, it does not explicitly give us all the information we need to daily live our lives. Part of the problem is that some Christians take the saying "the Bible says it, that settles it, I believe it" to extremes. While the statement is absolutely true and should reflect how we view the Bible, God's Word does not instruct us to abandon our brains or ignore our experiences. True reason is completely compatible with Scripture. Experience can help us in our understanding of Scripture. While the Bible must be our authority, we must also use it to confirm and verify the conclusions we reach with our God-given reason and God-directed experience (1 Peter 3:15).



Believing what the Bible says about itself is not bibliolatry. Rather, accepting God's Word for what it claims to be is in fact worshiping the God who breathed it. [GotQuestions.org](http://GotQuestions.org)

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## **Rod Mattoon - An Acrostic on How to Search ... Search the Scriptures**

### S-Studiously

\* Psalm 119:12—Blessed art thou, O Lord: teach me thy statutes.

\* 2 Timothy 2:15—Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

### E-Earnestly

\* Psalm 119:4—Thou hast commanded us to keep thy precepts diligently.

### A-Anxiously

\* Psalm 119:9—Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed thereto according to thy word.

\* Psalm 119:20—My soul breaketh for the longing that it hath unto thy judgments at all times.

### R-Regularly

\* Psalm 1:2—But his delight is in the law of the Lord; and in his law doth he meditate day and night.

\* Acts 17:11—These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so.

### C-Carefully

\* Psalm 119:30—I have chosen the way of truth: thy judgments have I laid before me.

### H-Humbly

\* Psalm 119:36—Incline my heart unto thy testimonies, and not to covetousness.

### T-Thankfully

\* Psalm 119:7—I will praise thee with uprightness of heart, when I shall have learned thy righteous judgments.

\* Jeremiah 15:16—Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart: for I am called by thy name, O Lord God of hosts.

### H-Happily

\* Psalm 19:8—The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes.

\* Psalm 119:16—I will delight myself in thy statutes: I will not forget thy word.

### E-Eagerly

\* Psalm 119:33—Teach me, O Lord, the way of thy statutes; and I shall keep it unto the end.

\* 1 Peter 2:2—As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby:

### S-Systematically

\* Luke 24:27—And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself.

\* Isaiah 28:9–10.... Whom shall he teach knowledge? and whom shall he make to understand doctrine? them that are weaned from the milk, and drawn from the breasts. [10] For precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little:

### C-Concernedly

\* Psalm 1:1–2.... Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth

in the seat of the scornful. [2] But his delight is in the law of the Lord; and in his law doth he meditate day and night.

\* Psalm 119:34—Give me understanding, and I shall keep thy law; yea, I shall observe it with my whole heart.

R-Respectfully

\* Psalm 119:15—I will meditate in thy precepts, and have respect unto thy ways.

\* Psalm 19:9—The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring for ever: the judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether.

I-Intently

\* Psalm 119:40—Behold, I have longed after thy precepts: quicken me in thy righteousness.

\* Proverbs 2:1–5.... My son, if thou wilt receive my words, and hide my commandments with thee; [2] So that thou incline thine ear unto wisdom, and apply thine heart to understanding; [3] Yea, if thou criest after knowledge, and liftest up thy voice for understanding; [4] If thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasures; [5] Then shalt thou understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God.

P-Prayerfully

\* Psalm 119:18—Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law.

\* James 1:5–7.... If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him. [6] But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed. [7] For let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord.

T-Trustingly

\* Psalm 119:43—And take not the word of truth utterly out of my mouth; for I have hoped in thy judgments.

\* Acts 24:14—But this I confess unto thee, that after the way which they call heresy, so worship I the God of my fathers, believing all things which are written in the law and in the prophets:

U-Unashamedly

\* Psalm 119:6—Then shall I not be ashamed, when I have respect unto all thy commandments.

\* Psalm 119:35—Make me to go in the path of thy commandments; for therein do I delight.

\* Psalm 119:59—I thought on my ways, and turned my feet unto thy testimonies.

R-Retentively

\* Psalm 119:11—Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee.

\* Jeremiah 20:9—Then I said, I will not make mention of him, nor speak any more in his name. But his word was in mine heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I was weary with forbearing, and I could not stay.

E-Expectantly

\* Joshua 1:8—This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success.

\* Isaiah 55:11—So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.

S-Satisfyingly

\* Psalm 119:50—This is my comfort in my affliction: for thy word hath quickened me.

\* Job 23:12—Neither have I gone back from the commandment of his lips; I have esteemed the words of his mouth more than my necessary food. ([Treasures from John.](#))

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**What Do the Experts Say?**

These are the very Scriptures that testify about me, yet you refuse to come to me to have life. John 5:39–40

Today's Scripture & Insight: John 5:31–40

Boston Globe columnist Jeff Jacoby writes of the “uncanny ability of experts to get things hopelessly, cataclysmically wrong.” A quick glance at recent history shows he’s right. The great inventor Thomas Edison, for instance, once declared that talking movies would never replace silent films. And in 1928, Henry Ford declared, “People are becoming too intelligent ever to have another war.” Countless other predictions by “experts” have missed the mark badly. Genius obviously has its limits.

Only one Person is completely reliable, and He had strong words for some so-called experts. The religious leaders of Jesus’s day claimed to have the truth. These scholars and theologians thought they knew what the promised Messiah would be like when He arrived.

Jesus cautioned them, “You study the Scriptures diligently because you think that in them you have eternal life.” Then He pointed out how they were missing the heart of the matter. “These are the very Scriptures that testify about me, yet you refuse to come to me to have life” (John 5:39–40).

As another new year gets underway, we’ll hear predictions ranging from the terrifying to the wildly optimistic. Many of them will be stated with a great deal of confidence and authority. Don’t be alarmed. Our confidence remains in the One at the very heart of the Scriptures. He has a firm grip on us and on our future. By: Tim Gustafson ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Father, whenever we are troubled or alarmed, help us to seek You. We commit this coming year and all it holds to You.

Knowing the future is uncertain; knowing the One who holds the future is a sure thing.

**John 5:40 and you are unwilling to come to Me so that you may have life.**

BGT John 5:40 κα ο θ λετε λθε ν πρ ς με να ζω ν χητε.

KJV John 5:40 And ye will not come to me, that ye might have life.

NET John 5:40 but you are not willing to come to me so that you may have life.

CSB John 5:40 And you are not willing to come to Me so that you may have life.

ESV John 5:40 yet you refuse to come to me that you may have life.

NIV John 5:40 yet you refuse to come to me to have life.

NLT John 5:40 Yet you refuse to come to me to receive this life.

NRS John 5:40 Yet you refuse to come to me to have life.

NJB John 5:40 and yet you refuse to come to me to receive life!

NAB John 5:40 But you do not want to come to me to have life.

YLT John 5:40 and ye do not will to come unto me, that ye may have life;

- **unwilling:** Jn 5:44 Jn 1:11 Jn 3:19 Jn 8:45-46 Jn 12:37-41 Ps 81:11 Isa 49:7 50:2 53:1-3 Mt 22:3 23:37 Rev 22:17
- **that:** Jn 6:27,37,40,68,69 Jn 7:37,38 Jn 11:25,26 Ro 6:23 1Jn 5:11-13
- [John 5 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Resources:

John 1:11 He came to His own, and those who were His own did not receive Him.

John 3:19 (**HERE IS WHY THEY WERE UNWILLING!**) “This is the judgment, that the Light has come into the world, and **men loved the darkness rather than the Light**, for their deeds were evil.

Matthew 23:37 “Jerusalem, Jerusalem, who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, the way a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, and you were unwilling.

John 6:37, 40 "All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will certainly not cast out.....40 "For this is the will of My Father, that everyone who beholds the Son and believes in Him will have eternal life, and I Myself will raise him up on the last day."

John 7:37; 38 Now on the last day, the great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, "If anyone is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink. 38 "He who believes in Me, as the Scripture said, 'From his innermost being will flow rivers of living water.'"

John 11:25; 26 Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in Me will live even if he dies, 26 and everyone who lives and believes in Me will never die. Do you believe this?"

Romans 6:23 For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

1 John 5:11-13 And the testimony is this, that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. 12 He who has the Son has the life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have the life. 13 These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, so that you may know that you have eternal life.

## UNBELIEVING AND UNWILLING

John 5:40-47 "concludes our Lord Jesus Christ's wondrous defence of His own divine mission. It is a conclusion worthy of the defence, full of heart-searching appeals to the consciences of His enemies, and rich in deep truths. A mighty sermon is followed by a mighty application." (Ryle)

**And** (kai) - This conjunction functions to connect the following statement to the previous statement about the Scriptures the Jews zealously searched. Some of the other translations render it "**yet**" (ESV, NIV, NLT) or "**but**" (NET) instead of "**and**" because Jn 5:40 functions more like a contrast. In other words, Jesus has just stated that the Scriptures "testify about" Him. One would think this truth would make a Jewish person excited to know the true Messiah, but Jesus says in essence "to the contrary..." thus the preference for a term of contrast like "**yet**" or "**but**."

**You are** (absolutely) **unwilling** ([thelo](#)) **to come** (active voice - refusal to make a volitional choice to come) **to Me so that** (term of purpose) **you may have** (present tense - continually have spiritual) **life** ([zoe](#)) - "You have no heart, desire, or inclination to come to Me." This is the purpose of John in writing the Gospel (John 20:31), for there is life only in Christ Jesus (cf Col 3:4). **Unwilling** is two words (ou = absolute negation + [thelo](#)) and so more literally reads *they were absolutely not willing*.

Why were they **unwilling to come** to the Light of the world (Jn 8:12)? As John had explained earlier, they "loved the darkness rather than the Light!" (Jn 3:19+) The result was that they showed that they in essence loved death rather than the true life found only in Christ! Their **unwilling** hearts grieved/quenched the Spirit and thus blunted His illuminating ministry (See Illumination) and this in turn made it impossible for these hyper-religious men to find life in the Living Word (Heb 4:12+ - life giving word) of God about the Living Word Who stood in their midst!

**Swindoll** - Rather than reading Scripture as a means to knowing God, they made the law their god. (AKA "Bibliolatry") (Borrow [Insights on John](#))

**MacDonald** - The real reason people do not accept the Savior is not because they cannot understand the gospel, or find it impossible to believe on Jesus. There is nothing about the Lord Jesus that makes it impossible for them to trust Him. The real fault lies in man's own will. He loves his sins more than he loves the Savior. He does not want to give up his wicked ways. (Borrow [Believer's Bible Commentary](#))

Jesus' main point is that there is nothing intrinsically life-giving about the Torah if one misses how it points to the Messiah and life in Him. Praise God that not every Jewish person was **unwilling** and spiritually blind and deaf, John writing "Philip found Nathanael and said to him, "We (PHILIP AND SIMON/[CEPHAS](#) - Jn 1:41-42) have found Him of Whom Moses in the Law and also the Prophets wrote—Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of Joseph." (Jn 1:45+).

**J C Ryle** - Let us mark, in this passage, the reason why many souls are lost. The Lord Jesus says to the unbelieving Jews,—“Ye will not come to me that ye might have life.” These words are a golden sentence, which ought to be engraven in our memories, and treasured up in our minds. It is want of will to come to Christ for salvation that will be found, at last, to have shut the many out of heaven.—It is not men's sins. All manner of sin may be forgiven.—It is not any decree of God. We are not told in the Bible of any whom God has only created to be destroyed.—It is not any limit in Christ's work of redemption. He has paid a price sufficient for all mankind.—It is something far more than this. It is man's own innate unwillingness to come to Christ, repent, and believe. Either from

pride, or laziness, or love of sin, or love of the world, the many have no mind, or wish, or heart, or desire to seek life in Christ....Let it be noted here that (1.) we are all by nature dead in sins;—that (2.) spiritual life is laid up for sinners in Christ alone; He is the fountain of life;—that (3.) in order to receive benefit from Christ men must come to him by faith, and believe: believing is coming;—and, finally, (4.) that the real reasons why men do not come to Christ, and consequently die in their sins, is their want of will to come....We should observe in this concluding part of our Lord's address, that He charges the Jews with four distinct sins: (1.) want of real will to come to Him, (2.) want of real love to God, (3.) undue desire of man's praise, (4.) want of real faith in Moses writings. ([John 5 Commentary](#))

**Steven Cole** - C. H. Spurgeon has two sermons on John 5:40, which I encourage you to read ([John 5:40 Unwillingness to Come to Christ](#)). In the first one, preached when he was only 21 years-old ([Free Will a Slave](#)), he develops four points: (1) Men by nature are dead. (2) In Christ Jesus there is life. (3) Eternal life is given to all who come for it. (4) By nature, no man will come to Christ, because they are unwilling. On this last point, he explains that no one can come to Christ unless the Father draws him (John 6:44). He argues that no true Christian will say that he came to Christ of his own free will apart from God's first seeking him and drawing him to the Savior. ([The Witnesses to Jesus](#))

**John MacArthur** - Clinging to their superficial system of self-righteousness by works, in their stubborn unbelief, they became ignorant of "God's righteousness and [sought] to establish their own" (Ro 10:3). But self-righteousness cannot save anyone, since "all our righteous deeds are like a filthy garment" (Isa. 64:6) and because "whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles in one point, he has become guilty of all" (James 2:10). Thus, salvation comes not from "having a righteousness of [one's] own derived from the Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which comes from God on the basis of faith" (Phil. 3:9; cf. Ro 3:20–30). ([The MacArthur New Testament Commentary](#))

**Matthew Henry** - You search the scriptures, you believe the prophets, who you cannot but see testify of me;**and yet** (HENRY ALSO SEES IT AS A CONTRASTING THOUGHT) you will not come to Me, to Whom they direct you." Their estrangement from Christ was the fault not so much of their understandings as of their wills. This is expressed as a complaint; Christ offered life, and it was not accepted. ([John 5 Commentary](#))

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**ILLUSTRATION** - I know a man who used to profess to believe the gospel. He was a good Bible teacher. He went on to earn a Ph.D. at Harvard. He is a far more brilliant and accomplished scholar than I am. He is now a professor of New Testament at a liberal graduate school of theology. But in reading the descriptions of his three scholarly books on Amazon.com, I seriously question whether he knows Jesus in a saving way. Like these Jews, he has studied the Scriptures, but he missed coming to Christ so that he may have life. ([The Witnesses to Jesus](#) - Steven Cole)

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## Beyond The Status Quo

But you are not willing to come to Me that you may have life. — John 5:40

Today's Scripture: John 5:35-47

Dr. Jack Mezirow, professor emeritus at Columbia Teachers College, believes that an essential element in adult learning is to challenge our own ingrained perceptions and examine our insights critically. Dr. Mezirow says that adults learn best when faced with what he calls a "disorienting dilemma"—something that "helps you critically reflect on the assumptions you've acquired" (Barbara Strauch, The New York Times). This is the opposite of saying, "My mind is made up—don't confuse me with the facts."

When Jesus healed on the Sabbath, He challenged the deeply held beliefs of many religious leaders, and they sought to silence Him (John 5:16-18). Jesus said to them: "You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me. But you are not willing to come to Me that you may have life" (vv.39-40).

Oswald Chambers observed, "God has a way of bringing in facts which upset a man's doctrines if these stand in the way of God getting at his soul."

Unsettling experiences that cause us to question our assumptions about the Lord can also lead us to a deeper understanding and trust in Him—if we're willing to think it through and come to Him. By: David C. McCasland ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

My mind cries its questions,  
My longing heart, joining.  
O Father, please hear me!  
O Spirit, keep teaching!  
—Verway



“The unexamined life is not worth living.”  
—Socrates

## John 5:41 "I do not receive glory from men;

BGT John 5:41 Δ ξαν παρ νθρ πων ο λαμβ νω,  
KJV John 5:41 I receive not honour from men.  
NET John 5:41 "I do not accept praise from people,  
CSB John 5:41 "I do not accept glory from men,  
ESV John 5:41 I do not receive glory from people.  
NIV John 5:41 "I do not accept praise from men,  
NLT John 5:41 "Your approval means nothing to me,  
NRS John 5:41 I do not accept glory from human beings.  
NJB John 5:41 Human glory means nothing to me.  
NAB John 5:41 "I do not accept human praise;  
YLT John 5:41 glory from man I do not receive,

- Jn 5:34 Jn 6:15 Jn 7:18 Jn 8:50,54 1Th 2:6 1Pe 2:21 2Pe 1:17
- [John 5 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

### Related Passages:

John 6:15 (JESUS SPURNED THEIR OFFER OF "GLORY") So Jesus, perceiving that they were intending to come and take Him by force to make Him king, withdrew again to the mountain by Himself alone.

John 7:18 "He who speaks from himself seeks his own glory; but He who is seeking the glory of the One who sent Him, He is true, and there is no unrighteousness in Him.

John 8:50; 54 "But **I do not seek My glory**; there is One who seeks and judges....54 Jesus answered, "If I glorify Myself, My glory is nothing; it is My Father who glorifies Me, of Whom you say, 'He is our God';

## JESUS NOT SEEKING GLORY FROM MEN

**I do not receive** (accept - [lambano](#)) **glory** (honor - [doxa](#)) **from men** - NLT = "Your approval means nothing to me," **Glory** (honor - [doxa](#)) is used in this context with nuance or sense of receiving men's approval. In John 5:34 Jesus did not receive (accept - [lambano](#)) even the human testimony of John the Baptist! How much less would He accept human praise. Jesus is saying He does not receive honor that would be given to a person because of their status. In short, had Jesus been the kind of Messiah they were looking for and desired (a conquering king), all would have followed Him. One related point which Jesus discusses in Jn 5:44 is that the Jews do receive (or accept) honor from other men.

**A T Robertson** - Mere honour and praise Jesus does not expect from men (Jn 5:34). This is not wounded pride, for ambition is not Christ's motive. He is unlike the Jews (Jn 5:44; 12:43; Mt. 6:1f.) and seeks not his own glory, but the glory and fellowship of the Father (Jn 1:14; 2:11; 7:18). Paul did not seek glory from men (1Th 2:6). ([Word Pictures of the New Testament](#))

**THOUGHT** - What a powerful example! Do we see our own glory at times? That's rhetorical because I look in the mirror every morning! Oh, to be continually growing in grace and knowledge of our humble Jesus! Amen. Remember, beloved, we have an audience of One Whose approval we should seek and that is our heavenly Father.

[Life Application Study Bible \(borrow\)](#) adds "Whose praise do you seek? The religious leaders enjoyed great prestige in Israel, but their stamp of approval meant nothing to Jesus. He was concerned about God's approval. **This is a good principle for us. If even the highest officials in the world approve of our**

**actions and God does not, we should be concerned. But if God approves, even though others don't, we should be content."**

**Lenski** - Jesus reads their hearts and sees how they may think that he is motivated just as they are, that he is piqued because they do not honor and glorify Him. This he cuts off at once....The object (**glory doxa**) is placed forward (FIRST IN GREEK SENTENCE) for emphasis: "glory," honor, praise, distinction "from men," in distinction from "the glory that comes from the only God" (Jn 5:44) Even when men offered it to him (Jn 6:15) he spurned it and did not catch at it. Jesus took only the glory which God gave him, God directly, and God through the faith of believing men. Let not these Jews imagine that Jesus is miffed because they do not honor him, that this is why he is scoring them so severely. (Borrow [The interpretation of St. John's gospel](#))

**MacDonald** - In condemning the Jews for their failure to receive Him, the Lord did not want them to think that He was hurt because they had not given Him honor. He did not come into the world for the purpose of being praised by the men of this world. He was not dependent on their praise, but rather sought the praise of His Father. Even if men rejected Him, that did not detract from His glory. (Borrow [Believer's Bible Commentary](#))

**J Michael Ramsey on not receive glory** - Jesus implies two things: first, that He does not care what his accusers may "think" (Jn 5:39) of Him or of His claims; second, that they themselves" do "accept glory from humans," whether from each other (see Jn 5:44) or from anyone who comes along (Jn 5:43). (Borrow [The Gospel of John](#))

**Utley** has an interesting comment on **not receive glory from men** - These verses seem to reflect the fact that the Jewish religious leaders enjoyed the applause from their peers. They gloried in quoting rabbis from the past, but because of spiritual blindness they missed the greatest of all teachers, who was in their midst. This is one of Jesus' strong denunciations of first-century rabbinical Judaism (also note the parable in Matt. 21:33-46; Mark 12:1-12; Luke 20:9-19).

**Matthew Henry** - I receive not honour from men, come in a parenthesis, to obviate an objection against him, as if he sought his own glory, and made himself the head of a party, in obliging all to come to him, and applaud him. Note, 1. He did not covet nor court the applause of men, did not in the least affect that worldly pomp and splendour in which the carnal Jews expected their Messiah to appear. He charged those whom he cured not to make him known, and withdrew from those that would have made him king. 2. He had not the applause of men. Instead of receiving honour from men, he received a great deal of dishonour and disgrace from men, for he made himself of no reputation. 3. He needed not the applause of men; it was no addition to his glory whom all the angels of God worship, nor was he any otherwise pleased with it than as it was according to his Father's will, and for the happiness of those who, in giving honour to him, received much greater honour from him. ([John 5 Commentary](#))

**John 5:42 but I know you, that you do not have the love of God in yourselves.**

BGT John 5:42 ἄλλ' γινώσκω μὴ ἔχειτε τὴν ἀγάπην τοῦ θεοῦ ἐν ἑαυτοῖς.

KJV John 5:42 But I know you, that ye have not the love of God in you.

NET John 5:42 but I know you, that you do not have the love of God within you.

CSB John 5:42 but I know you-- that you have no love for God within you.

ESV John 5:42 But I know that you do not have the love of God within you.

NIV John 5:42 but I know you. I know that you do not have the love of God in your hearts.

NLT John 5:42 because I know you don't have God's love within you.

NRS John 5:42 But I know that you do not have the love of God in you.

NJB John 5:42 Besides, I know you too well: you have no love of God in you.

NAB John 5:42 moreover, I know that you do not have the love of God in you.

YLT John 5:42 but I have known you, that the love of God ye have not in yourselves.

know: Jn 1:47-49 2:25 21:17 Lu 16:15 Heb 4:12,13 Rev 2:23

- **that:** Jn 5:44 Jn 8:42,47,55 Jn 15:23,24 Ro 8:7 1Jn 2:15 1Jn 3:17 1Jn 4:20
- [John 5 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**Related Passages:**

Matthew 15:8-9 THIS PEOPLE HONORS ME WITH THEIR LIPS, BUT **THEIR HEART IS FAR AWAY FROM ME.** 9 'BUT IN VAIN DO THEY WORSHIP ME, TEACHING AS DOCTRINES THE PRECEPTS OF MEN.'

John 5:44 "**How can you believe, when you receive glory from one another** and you do not seek the glory that is from the one and only God?

John 15:23 "He who hates Me hates My Father also.

Luke 11:42 "But woe to you Pharisees! For you pay tithes of mint and rue and every kind of garden herb, and **yet disregard justice and the love of God**; but these are the things you should have done without neglecting the others.

## **JESUS KNOWS HIS JEWISH LISTENERS LACK LOVE FOR GOD**

**but** - What is Jesus contrasting? He has just stated "I do not receive glory from men" because He had love for His Father and wanted only His praise. By contrast Jesus read their thoughts (cf Jn 2:24-25+) and knew they cared more about men's praise than God's praise and did not love God and praise from Him, but loved the praise of men (as He directly states in Jn 5:44).

**D A Carson** on this "**but**" - Jesus does not accept praise from men (v. 41), for his single-eyed vision is to do what pleases his Father (cf. Jn 8:29) as his expression of filial love for the Father (cf. Jn 14:31); but, by contrast with Jesus, his interlocutors do not love God. (Borrow [The Gospel according to John](#))

**I know** ([ginosko](#) in perfect tense) **you** - How does Jesus **know** ([ginosko](#))? He knows by experience because they are persecuting Him and beginning to entertain the idea of killing Him. He also knows by divine perception (this is usually conveyed by another verb for know = [eido](#)) because He knows men's hearts. Yes, He had "emptied Himself" (Php 2:7+) but He was still fully God and could still read men's hearts and still walk on water! John used [ginosko](#) earlier in a similar sense writing "He Himself **knew** ([ginosko](#)) what was in man." (Jn 2:25+). "

**Ryle's** paraphrase - "But the plain truth is, that I know and have long known the state of your hearts, and I know that you have no real love of God in you. You profess to worship the one true God, and to give Him honour. But you show by your conduct, that with all your profession you do not really love God." To a Jewish hearer this tremendous charge must have been peculiarly galling. It was a charge that none but our Lord could make with equal decision, because He read men's hearts, and knew what was in them. The word "**I know**" is literally "I have known." Alford paraphrases the sentence,—“By long trial and bearing with your manners these many generations, and personally also, I have known, and do know you.” ([John 5 Commentary](#))

**That you do not have the love** ([agape](#)) **of God in yourselves** - The Jews do not **love** Him and if they do not **love** Him, they do not love the Father Who sent Him. The next verse supports this premise. Jesus used the related verb [agapao](#) to describe what they really loved in Jn 3:19 declaring they "**loved** ([agapao](#)) the darkness rather than the Light (Jn 8:12), for their deeds were evil."

**MacDonald** - Man's failure to receive the Son of God is here traced back to its cause. These men did not have the love of God in them, that is, they loved themselves rather than God. If they had loved God, they would have received the One whom God had sent. By their rejection of the Lord Jesus, they showed their utter lack of love for His Father. (Borrow [Believer's Bible Commentary](#))

**Leon Morris** on **do not have the love** ([agape](#)) **of God** - They make a profession of loving him, but in fact there is no real love. This is always the case where religion is basically self-willed. The Jews worked out their pattern of religion and tried to fit God into it. They did not seek first the way of God and then try to model their religious practices on it.<sup>122</sup> They succumbed to the perennial temptation of religious people. ([The Gospel according to John - BORROW](#))

**Colin Kruse** - Their desire for praise from one another and the absence of real love for God, Jesus implied, prevented them from accepting as valid the witness borne to Jesus. (Borrow [The Gospel according to John : an introduction and commentary](#))

**NET Note on love of God** - The genitive in the phrase *tēn agapēn tou theou*, "the love of God" could be translated as either a subjective genitive ("God's love") or an objective genitive ("love for [toward] God"). Either is grammatically possible. This is possibly an instance of a plenary genitive (see ExSyn 119–21; M. Zerwick, "[Biblical Greek : illustrated by examples](#)", §§36–39). If so, the emphasis would be on the love God gives which in turn produces love for Him, but **Jesus' opponents are lacking any such love inside them.**

**John 5:43 "I have come in My Father's name, and you do not receive Me; if another comes in his own name, you will receive him.**

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BGT John 5:43 γ λυθα ν τ ν ματι το πατρ ς μου, κα ο λαμβ νει με· ν λλος λθ ν τ ν ματι τ ὀ ,  
κε νον λ μπεισθε.

Amplified I have come in My Father's name and with His power, and you do not receive Me [your hearts are not open to Me, you give Me no welcome]; but if another comes in his own name and his own power and with no other authority but himself, you will receive him and give him your approval.

Living Bible I know, because I have come to you representing my Father and you refuse to welcome me, though you readily enough receive those who aren't sent from him, but represent only themselves!

Weymouth I have come as my Father's representative, and you do not receive me. If some one else comes representing only himself, him you will receive.

Revised English Bible I have come accredited by my Father, and you have no welcome for me; but let someone self-accredited come, and you will give him a welcome.

KJV John 5:43 I am come in my Father's name, and ye receive me not: if another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive.

NET John 5:43 I have come in my Father's name, and you do not accept me. If someone else comes in his own name, you will accept him.

CSB John 5:43 I have come in My Father's name, yet you don't accept Me. If someone else comes in his own name, you will accept him.

ESV John 5:43 I have come in my Father's name, and you do not receive me. If another comes in his own name, you will receive him.

NIV John 5:43 I have come in my Father's name, and you do not accept me; but if someone else comes in his own name, you will accept him.

NLT John 5:43 For I have come to you in my Father's name, and you have rejected me. Yet if others come in their own name, you gladly welcome them.

NRS John 5:43 I have come in my Father's name, and you do not accept me; if another comes in his own name, you will accept him.

NJB John 5:43 I have come in the name of my Father and you refuse to accept me; if someone else should come in his own name you would accept him.

NAB John 5:43 I came in the name of my Father, but you do not accept me; yet if another comes in his own name, you will accept him.

YLT John 5:43 'I have come in the name of my Father, and ye do not receive me; if another may come in his own name, him ye will receive;

- **come:** Jn 3:16 Jn 6:38 Jn 8:28,29 Jn 10:25 Jn 12:28 Jn 17:4-6 Eze 23:21 Heb 5:4,5
- **If another comes in his own name:** Mt 24:5,24 Ac 5:36,37 Acts 21:38
- [John 5 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passages:

John 3:16 "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.

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

## MESSIAH NOT WELCOMED

**I have come in My Father's (pater) Name (onoma), and you (ABSOLUTELY) do not receive (lambano) Me - REB** = "I have come accredited by my Father, and you have no welcome for me." This would be further evidence that these Jews did not have the love of God in themselves, for if they had truly loved the Father, they would have readily received His Son.

**A T Robertson on in My Father's Name** - Seven times Jesus in John speaks of the 'Name' of the Father (John 5:43; John 10:25;

John 12:28; John 17:6, 11-12, 26). "And yet ye do not receive me," as in John 5:40, "the Gospel of the Rejection" (John 1:11; John 3:11, 32; John 12:37) often applied to the Fourth Gospel....Credulous about the false Messiahs, incredulous about Christ. ([Word Pictures of the New Testament](#))

**MacDonald** - The Lord Jesus came in His Father's name, that is, He came to do His Father's will, to bring glory to His Father, and to obey His Father in all things. If men had really loved God, they would have loved the One who sought to please God in all He said and did. (Borrow [Believer's Bible Commentary](#))

**Utley** on **you do not receive Me** - Throughout the Gospel of John, the focus of believing in Jesus is not a prescribed theological creed but a personal encounter with Him (i.e., John 5:39-40). Belief begins with a decision to trust Him. This starts a growing personal relationship of discipleship that culminates in doctrinal maturity and Christlike living. [SPECIAL TOPIC: RECEIVE SPECIAL TOPIC: WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO "RECEIVE," "BELIEVE," "CONFESS/PROFESS," "CALL UPON"?](#)

**Ryle** adds "This sentence contains a proof of the assertion made in the preceding verse. "You show that you have no real love for God, by your not receiving. Me who have come in my Father's name, and desire nothing so much as His honour. If you really loved and honoured God as you professed to do, you would gladly receive and honour His Son."" ([John 5 Commentary](#))

**If another comes in his own name, you will receive ([Iambano](#)) him** - What does Jesus mean by **another**? Note the contrast - reject Jesus versus accept "**another**." This would strongly support that by **another** Jesus is referring to other those who came pretending to be the Messiah and that the Jews would be willing to accept him.

**Utley** on "**you shall receive him**" - This is a play on the rabbis' study methods of comparing teachers from differing rabbinical schools from the Talmud. Michael Magill, New Testament TransLine, has a good quote: "*The Jewish leaders will receive a human teacher or rabbi who does not claim to be sent by God. With a human teacher, they are in a reciprocal relationship of peers, exchanging glory on an equal basis. With a prophet sent from God, they must be in a subordinate position, hearing and obeying. This has always been at the root of why God's prophets were rejected*" (p. 318).

**John MacArthur** on **another** - Over the centuries there have been many false messiahs (as many as sixty-four according to some Jewish historians [Leon Morris, *The Gospel According to John, The New International Commentary on the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1979), 333 n. 122]). The first-century Jewish historian Josephus noted an increase in false messiahs in the years leading up to the Jewish revolt against Rome (A.D. 66–70). Sixty years later another messianic pretender, [Simon Bar Kochba](#), appeared. Even Rabbi Akiba, the most esteemed rabbi of the time, believed Bar Kochba to be the messiah—until his revolt was crushed by the Romans with catastrophic results for the Jewish people. False messiahs will proliferate as the second coming draws near (Matt. 24:23–24), culminating in the ultimate false messiah, the Antichrist (2 Thess. 2:3–12). (See also "[Pseudo-Messiahs](#)" in [Jewish Encyclopedia](#)) ([The MacArthur New Testament Commentary](#))

**Ryle** on **another** - In this sentence our Lord supposes a case, to show the corrupt and carnal state of the Jews' hearts. "If another public teacher shall appear, giving himself out to be some great one, not seeking God's honour, and doing all in God's name, but aiming to exalt himself, and get honour to himself, you will receive and believe him. You reject Me the true Son of God. You are ready to receive any false pretender who comes among you, though he may give no honour to the God whom you profess to worship. It is true then that you have no real love of God in you." I believe decidedly that our Lord spoke these words prophetically. He had in view the many false Christs and false Messiahs who arose within the first hundred years after His death, and by whom so many of the Jews were invariably deluded. According to Stier no less than sixty-four false Messiahs appeared to them, and were more or less believed. The readiness with which they believed these impostors is a remarkable historical fact, and a striking fulfilment of the words before us. They proved as forward to believe these pretenders to a Divine mission who came in their own names, as they had been backward to believe our Lord. I may add, however, that I am one of those who doubt whether the words of our Lord have even yet received their complete fulfilment. **I think it highly probable that the world may yet see a personal Antichrist arise, who will succeed in obtaining credence from a vast portion of the Jewish nation. Then, and not till then, when Antichrist has appeared, this verse will be completely accomplished.** Chrysostom, Cyril, Theophylact, Euthymius, Alcuin, Heinsius, take this view. ([John 5 Commentary](#))

**MacDonald** - probably He was referring here to the Antichrist. In a coming day, a self-appointed ruler will rise among the Jewish people and demand to be worshiped as God (2 Thess. 2:8–10). The majority of the Jewish nation will accept this Antichrist as their ruler, and as a result they will come under severe judgment from God (1 Jn. 2:18). (Borrow [Believer's Bible Commentary](#))

**Stier** remarks, "He of whom the Lord here prophecies, is finally Antichrist, with his open and avowed denial of God and of Christ; with his most daring 'I,' before which all the proud will humbly bow down, because they will find themselves in him, and will honour him as their true God. As the Father reveals Himself in Christ, so will Satan manifest himself in Antichrist, and give him all his work and witness, and his own honour as the prince of this world; and the wicked will yield themselves to him, because through unbelief they have already fallen into his nature, and fitly belong to him."



**Utley** has an interesting thought that "This is a play on the rabbis' study methods of comparing teachers from differing rabbinical schools from the Talmud. Michael Magill, New Testament TransLine, has a good quote: "*The Jewish leaders will receive a human teacher or rabbi who does not claim to be sent by God. With a human teacher, they are in a reciprocal relationship of peers, exchanging glory on an equal basis. With a prophet sent from God, they must be in a subordinate position, hearing and obeying. This has always been at the root of why God's prophets were rejected*" (p. 318).

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**Norman Geisler - [When Critics Ask](#) - JOHN 5:43—Does this verse indicate that “Jesus” is the “Father’s name” (or that Jesus is the Father), as [Oneness Pentecostals](#) believe?**

**MISINTERPRETATION:** Jesus affirmed, “I have come in My Father’s name, and you do not receive Me” (John 5:43 NASB). Oneness Pentecostals typically interpret “in My Father’s name” to mean that Jesus’ name is the Father’s name (i.e., Jesus is the Father) (Campbell, 1975, 43).

**CORRECTING THE MISINTERPRETATION:** The use of the word name in this verse has to do with authority. Whereas many come in their own name or authority, Jesus comes not in his own authority but in the authority of the Father. Clearly, then, this verse, far from indicating that Jesus is the Father, in fact points to the distinction between the Father and Jesus. One comes in the authority of the other. See also the discussions of John 10:30 and 14:6–1

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#### Related Resources:

- [What is Oneness doctrine? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- [What are the beliefs of Jesus only / oneness Pentecostals? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- [What is the United Pentecostal Church? | GotQuestions.org](#)

**John 5:44 "How can you believe, when you receive glory from one another and you do not seek the glory that is from the one and only God?"**

BGT John 5:44 π ς δ νασθε με ς πιστεσαι δ ξαν παρ λ λων λαμβοντες, κα τ ν δ ξαν τ ν παρ το μ του θεο ο ζητετε;

KJV John 5:44 How can ye believe, which receive honour one of another, and seek not the honour that cometh from God only?

NET John 5:44 How can you believe, if you accept praise from one another and don't seek the praise that comes from the only God?

CSB John 5:44 How can you believe? While accepting glory from one another, you don't seek the glory that comes from the only God.

ESV John 5:44 How can you believe, when you receive glory from one another and do not seek the glory that comes from the only God?

NIV John 5:44 How can you believe if you accept praise from one another, yet make no effort to obtain the praise that comes from the only God?

NLT John 5:44 No wonder you can't believe! For you gladly honor each other, but you don't care about the honor that comes from the one who alone is God.

NRS John 5:44 How can you believe when you accept glory from one another and do not seek the glory that comes from the one who alone is God?

NJB John 5:44 How can you believe, since you look to each other for glory and are not concerned with the glory that comes from the one God?

NAB John 5:44 How can you believe, when you accept praise from one another and do not seek the praise that comes from the only God?

YLT John 5:44 how are ye able -- ye -- to believe, glory from one another receiving, and the glory that is from God alone ye seek not?

- **can:** Jn 3:20 8:43 12:43 Jer 13:23 Ro 8:7,8 Heb 3:12

- **when:** Mt 23:5 Ga 5:19-21 Php 2:3
- **and:** 1Sa 2:30 2Ch 6:8 Mt 25:21-23 Lu 19:17 Ro 2:7,10,29 1Co 4:5 2Co 10:18 Jas 2:1 1Pe 1:7
- [John 5 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passage:

John 12:43 for they loved the approval of men rather than the approval of God.

## SELF SEEKING BLUNTS SAVING BELIEF

**MacDonald** - Here the Lord gave another reason for the failure of the Jewish people to accept Him. (Borrow [Believer's Bible Commentary](#))

**How can you believe** ([pisteuo](#)), **when you receive** ([lambano](#)) **glory** ([doxa](#) praise, honor) **from one another and you do not seek** ([zeteo](#)) **the glory** ([doxa](#) praise, honor) **that is from the one and only God** ([theos](#)) - Contrast Jesus' words in Jn 5:41! This question by Jesus is a condemning rhetorical question! They cannot **believe** in Jesus. They are too busy "patting each other on the back!" They are filled with pride and self-righteousness which God steadfastly opposes. Their self-glorification effectively cancels out the greater glorification that comes from God and is only available by knowing His Son.

**A T Robertson** on **How can you believe** - Emphasis on "**you**" (humeis), you being what you are. They were not true Jews (Romans 2:29; Esther 9:28) who cared for the glory of God, but they prefer the praise of men (Matthew 6:1-2; Matthew 23:5) like the Pharisees who feared to confess Christ (John 12:43). ([Word Pictures of the New Testament](#))

**J C Ryle** - Let us mark, secondly, in this passage, one principal cause of unbelief. The Lord Jesus says to the Jews,—**How can ye believe which receive honour one of another, and seek not the honour that cometh of God only?**" He meant by that saying, that they were not honest in their religion. With all their apparent desire to hear and learn, they cared more in reality for pleasing man than God. In this state of mind they were never likely to believe. A deep principle is contained in this saying of our Lord's, and one that deserves special attention. True faith does not depend merely on the state of man's head and understanding, but on the state of his heart. His mind may be convinced. His conscience may be pricked. But so long as there is anything the man is secretly loving more than God, there will be no true faith. The man himself may be puzzled, and wonder why he does not believe. He does not see that he is like a child sitting on the lid of his box, and wishing to open it, but not considering that his own weight keeps it shut. Let a man make sure that he honestly and really desires first the praise of God. It is the want of an honest heart which makes many stick fast in their religion all their days, and die at length without peace. Those who complain that they hear, and approve, and assent, but make no progress, and cannot get any hold on Christ, should ask themselves this simple question,—“Am I honest?—Am I sincere?—Do I really desire first the praise of God?” ([John 5 Commentary](#))

**MacDonald** - They were more interested in the approval of their fellow men than they were in God's approval. They were afraid of what their friends would say if they left Judaism. They were not willing to endure the reproach and suffering which would be heaped upon them if they became followers of the Lord Jesus. As long as a person is afraid of what others will say or do, he cannot be saved. In order to believe on the Lord Jesus, one must desire God's approval more than anyone else's. (Borrow [Believer's Bible Commentary](#))

**Spurgeon's Exposition** - Some men find it difficult to believe in Christ because they are always seeking honour for themselves; desire for the praise of men often blinds the mind and prejudices the spirit. How boldly our great Master speaks! There is no flattery on his lips. He is the faithful and true Witness, the very Word of God. Oh, that all men would give heed to his message!

**Spurgeon** adds "Some cannot believe in Jesus Christ because they are very fond of what they call pleasure. Every man desires happiness and is not to be condemned for this. The human mind was constituted to enjoy pleasure, but it was never created to be content with the vanities which are falsely called pleasures. It makes one blush to think of the trifles in which our neighbours take delight. Sinful pleasures are a great bar to faith and must be renounced. That evil companion who has charmed you with questionable jests must be given up. Do you say that you cannot quit him? Then I see why you cannot believe in Jesus. Unbelievers know that if they believe in Christ they must forsake that house of unclean amusement which leads to vice, and they cannot believe because they love the place of temptation. They hesitate, deliberate and say that they cannot believe in Jesus; but if they would speak the truth, they mean they cannot give up sweet sin. Sin is such a dainty, that they must roll it again under the tongue and relish it once more. They prefer pleasure to the Saviour. There are some who are unable to believe in Jesus Christ for reasons which I hardly care to utter publicly, and yet I must. I have sometimes had sorrowful proof of the reason why some men have lived in unbelief of Christ. After a death I have heard what would have been a shame to whisper in the ear of an unsuspecting wife. The man was a respectable merchant in the city and went into the 'best society', but he was keeping a mistress and living in fornication

all the while. He said he could not believe in Christ! Do you wonder? How could he? I speak plainly, because these things are common among respectable merchants and they need to be told plainly of their sins. Do not come whining to me about 'can't believe in Jesus Christ'. Of course you cannot while you live in filthy lusts. ([Why Men Cannot Believe in Christ](#))

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**Seek** ([2212](#)) ([zeteo](#)) implies giving attention and priority to and deliberately pursuing after. The most common sense of this word is to "seek". **Webster** says that to **seek** means to go in search or quest of, to look for, to try to discover, to search for by going from place to place. To inquire for; to ask for; to solicit; to endeavor to find or gain by any means. **Zēteō** in classical Greek is often used as a technical term for philosophical investigation, something "examined, considered" or "deliberated." The Old Testament tradition of seeking after God, the prophets, false gods, etc., was shown by Paul (Ro 10:20). The most striking application of **zēteō** is the New Testament religious application.

**Zeteo in John** - Jn 1:38; Jn 4:23; Jn 4:27; Jn 5:18; Jn 5:30; Jn 5:44; Jn 6:24; Jn 6:26; Jn 7:1; Jn 7:4; Jn 7:11; Jn 7:18; Jn 7:19; Jn 7:20; Jn 7:25; Jn 7:30; Jn 7:34; Jn 7:36; Jn 8:21; Jn 8:37; Jn 8:40; Jn 8:50; Jn 10:39; Jn 11:8; Jn 11:56; Jn 13:33; Jn 16:19; Jn 18:4; Jn 18:7; Jn 18:8; Jn 19:12; Jn 20:15

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## Crowd Control

How can you believe, who receive honor from one another, and do not seek the honor that comes from the only God? — John 5:44

Today's Scripture: John 5:31-44

A crowd can wield great control over an individual. I was reminded of this as I read a newspaper article about an old carnival headliner nicknamed "Cannonball." In his younger days he was blasted out of a cannon 1,200 times. When asked why he did this, he replied, "Do you know what it's like to feel the applause of 60,000 people? That's why I did it!"

Many religious leaders of Jesus' day loved the approval of the crowd. Outwardly religious, they pretended to have the truth but rejected the Savior. As they walked across the stage of human history, they paraded around in robes of self-righteousness and refused to believe in Jesus, not even giving Him a fair hearing. They were like people walking on a sheet of ice that was melting from the heat of an underlying lake of fire. They faced eternal condemnation because they were more concerned with receiving honor from one another than from God (Jn. 5:44).

How much does the crowd—your family, friends, and co-workers—influence you and your response to Jesus? Are you so interested in their approval that you are rejecting the only One who can save you from your sins? If so, consider the risk. Take the course of wisdom and receive Christ as your personal Savior. By: Mart DeHaan ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

If we, to gain the world's applause,  
Refuse to own the Savior's cause,  
What shame will fill us in that day  
When Christ His glory shall display!  
—Anon.

The Lord's approval is worth far more than the world's applause.

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**John 5:45 "Do not think that I will accuse you before the Father; the one who accuses you is Moses, in whom you have set your hope.**

BGT John 5:45 Μ ἄοκε τε τι γ κατηγορ σω μ ν πρ ς τ ν πατ ρα· στιν κατηγορ ν μ ν Μωϋσ ς, ε ς ν με ς λπ κατε.

KJV John 5:45 Do not think that I will accuse you to the Father: there is one that accuseth you, even Moses, in whom ye trust.

NET John 5:45 "Do not suppose that I will accuse you before the Father. The one who accuses you is Moses, in whom you have placed your hope.

CSB John 5:45 Do not think that I will accuse you to the Father. Your accuser is Moses, on whom you have set your hope.

ESV John 5:45 Do not think that I will accuse you to the Father. There is one who accuses you: Moses, on whom you have set your hope.

NIV John 5:45 "But do not think I will accuse you before the Father. Your accuser is Moses, on whom your hopes are set.

NLT John 5:45 "Yet it isn't I who will accuse you before the Father. Moses will accuse you! Yes, Moses, in whom you put your hopes.

NRS John 5:45 Do not think that I will accuse you before the Father; your accuser is Moses, on whom you have set your hope.

NJB John 5:45 Do not imagine that I am going to accuse you before the Father: you have placed your hopes on Moses, and Moses will be the one who accuses you.

NAB John 5:45 Do not think that I will accuse you before the Father: the one who will accuse you is Moses, in whom you have placed your hope.

YLT John 5:45 'Do not think that I will accuse you unto the Father; there is who is accusing you, Moses -- in whom ye have hoped;

- there: Jn 7:19 8:5,9 Ro 2:12,17-29 3:19,20 7:9-14 2Co 3:7-11 Ga 3:10
- in: Jn 8:5,6 9:28,29 Mt 19:7,8 Ro 10:5-10
- [John 5 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passages:

John 9:28 They reviled him and said, "You are His disciple, but **we are disciples of Moses**.

### JESUS "CALLS" MOSES AS PROSECUTING ATTORNEY

**Do not think** ([dokeo](#)) **that I will accuse** ([kategoreo](#)) **you before the Father** - **Do not think** is a [present imperative with a negative](#), this command directed at the religious leaders charging them to stop making assumptions about Him. Note Jesus does not say "your" Father but the Father. Jesus will not accuse them but He will judge them as guilty of rejected the Father's Son.

**The one who accuses** ([kategoreo](#)) **you is Moses, in whom you have set your hope** ([elpizo](#)) - He is not saying the real, literal Moses would make a formal accusation against the Jews. The point is that not to believe Jesus was not to believe Moses. It is as if Moses (or better the personification of Scriptures he wrote) prosecutes the case against the Jews which is ironic as he (the Scriptures he wrote) is the very one the Jewish authorities have placed their **hope**. Most of the uses of **hope** in the NT are not "hope so," but "hope sure," signifying absolute assurance of future good. In this case their **hope** is "hope so," as their hope of entering the Kingdom God will never be realized. Their false hope in heaven will be replaced by a sure home in hell.

**Set you hope** is in the perfect tense signifying that at a point in time they had come to a conclusion that their "sure" hope was in Moses (reading Torah, keeping laws, etc), and they were still in that abiding false belief/hope! Stated another way, "their hope is a present hope, and not simply a past state." (Morris)

[Utley](#) remarks that Scripture Moses wrote "was meant to be a guide (cf. Luke 16:31). The guide rejected, becomes an adversary (cf. Gal 3:8-14, 23-29+)."

**Ryle** - There was no need for Him to accuse them of unbelief. Moses himself, for whom they professed such respect, might be their accuser, and prove them guilty. "Even now," He says, "Moses accuseth you. His writings, daily read in your synagogue, are a constant witness of your unbelief." ([John 5 Commentary](#))

The Jews had a counterfeit hope, a false hope, but believers have a true hope, a sure hope Paul writing "(GOD WHO RAISES THE DEAD) Who delivered us from so great a peril of death, and will deliver us, **He on Whom we have set our hope. And He will yet deliver** ([rhuomai](#)) **us.**" (2Co 1:10+), for we have "fixed our hope on the Living God." (1Ti 4:10+) Moses will not support their hope, but will condemn them for their unbelief.

[Life Application Study Bible](#) ([borrow](#)) The Pharisees prided themselves on being the true followers of their ancestor Moses. They were trying to follow every one of his laws to the letter, and they even added some of their own. Jesus' warning that Moses would accuse them stung them to fury. Moses wrote about Jesus (Genesis 3:15; Numbers 21:9; 24:17; Deuteronomy 18:15), yet the religious leaders refused to believe Jesus when he came.

**NET Note** - There is evidence that some Jews of the 1st century looked on Moses as their intercessor at the final judgment (see page 160 in W. A. Meeks' book [The prophet-king. Moses traditions and the Johannine Christology](#)). This would mean the statement Moses, in whom you have placed your hope should be taken literally and relates directly to Jesus' statements about the final judgment in John 5:28–29.

**Accuse** (2723) [kategoreo](#) from **kata** = against + **agora** = the assembly, a place of public speaking. Other sources have **agoreuo** = to speak. The prefixed preposition suggests animosity!) means to speak against a person before a public tribunal or bring an accusation in court. To accuse formally and before a tribunal, to bring a charge publicly. The idea is to speak openly against, to condemn or accuse mainly in a legal sense. The cognate word [kategoria](#) was a legal technical term that referred to the content of the accusation or charge made against someone. Note that all of the Gospel uses involve accusing Jesus (except John 5:45).

### John 5:46 "For if you believed Moses, you would believe Me, for he wrote about Me.

BGT John 5:46 ε γ ρ πιστε ετε Μωϋσε , πιστε ετε ν μο · περ γ ρ μο κε νος γραψεν.

KJV John 5:46 For had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me: for he wrote of me.

NET John 5:46 If you believed Moses, you would believe me, because he wrote about me.

CSB John 5:46 For if you believed Moses, you would believe Me, because he wrote about Me.

ESV John 5:46 For if you believed Moses, you would believe me; for he wrote of me.

NIV John 5:46 If you believed Moses, you would believe me, for he wrote about me.

NLT John 5:46 If you really believed Moses, you would believe me, because he wrote about me.

NRS John 5:46 If you believed Moses, you would believe me, for he wrote about me.

NJB John 5:46 If you really believed him you would believe me too, since it was about me that he was writing;

NAB John 5:46 For if you had believed Moses, you would have believed me, because he wrote about me.

YLT John 5:46 for if ye were believing Moses, ye would have been believing me, for he wrote concerning me;

- **had**: Ga 2:19 3:10,13,24 4:21-31
- **for**: Jn 1:45 Ge 3:15 12:3 18:18 22:18 28:14 49:10 Nu 21:8,9 Nu 24:17,18 De 18:15,18,19 Ac 26:22 Ro 10:4 Heb 7:1-10:39
- [John 5 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

### Related Passages:

Genesis 3:15+ And I will put enmity between you (Satan) and the woman, And between your seed and her seed (Messiah); He shall bruise you on the head (The more deadly blow) And you shall bruise him on the heel."

Deuteronomy 18:18-19 'I will raise up a prophet from among their countrymen like you, and I will put My words in his mouth, and he shall speak to them all that I command him. 19 'It shall come about that whoever will not listen to My words which he shall speak in My name, I Myself will require it of him.

Acts 3:22 "Moses said, 'THE LORD GOD WILL RAISE UP FOR YOU A PROPHET LIKE ME FROM YOUR BRETHREN; TO HIM YOU SHALL GIVE HEED to everything He says to you.

Acts 7:37 "This is the Moses who said to the sons of Israel, 'GOD WILL RAISE UP FOR YOU A PROPHET LIKE ME FROM YOUR BRETHREN.'

Numbers 21:9 And Moses made a bronze serpent and set it on the standard; and it came about, that if a serpent bit any man, when he looked to the bronze serpent, he lived.

John 3:14 "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up;

John 8:56 "Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day (IN OTHER WORDS MOSES WROTE ABOUT JESUS CAUSING ABRAHAM TO REJOICE), and he saw it and was glad."

## MOSES WROTE ABOUT THE MESSIAH

**For** ([gar](#) - Term of explanation) - What is Jesus explaining? Check the context of the previous verse.

**If you believed** ([pisteuo](#)) **Moses, you would believe** ([pisteuo](#)) **Me, for he wrote about Me** - Jesus addresses the self-deception of the Jews. Jesus makes it clear that they did not really believe Moses! The point is that Moses wrote about the Messiah but they refused to believe his words and specifically refused to believe Jesus was the fulfillment of all the Messianic prophecies. There were over 300 [Messianic prophecies](#) in the OT (not all in the Pentateuch but enough to clearly identify the Messiah) so the Jews had many opportunities to see Jesus but they refused to believe the OT prophecies were fulfilled in Jesus.

**Ryle** - These words are simply an amplification of the idea in the preceding verse. If the Jews had really believed Moses, they could not have helped believing Christ. The witness of Moses to Christ, was so distinct, express, and unmistakable, that true belief in his writings must inevitably have led them to belief in Christ....There is a very close connection between the OT and the New. If a man doubts the inspiration of the OT Scriptures, it is not likely that he will accept the words of the Lord Jesus as being inspired. If people attack certain parts of the Bible, it won't be long before they cast doubt on the rest of the Book as well. ([John 5 Commentary](#))

**Utley** says this **IF** "is a SECOND CLASS CONDITIONAL SENTENCE called "contrary to fact," which asserts that Jewish leaders did not truly believe even in Moses' writings and that Jesus (the eschatological Moses [i.e., the Prophet of Deut. 18:15-19]) would be their judge on the last day." The "if" of John 5:47 introduces a FIRST CLASS CONDITIONAL SENTENCE which is assumed to be true (NIV has "since"). See [SPECIAL TOPIC: GREEK GRAMMATICAL TERMS](#), VII

**Robertson** - Conclusion of condition of second class (determined as unfulfilled) with imperfect indicative in both protasis and apodosis and an in apodosis. This was a home-thrust, proving that they did not really believe Moses. **He wrote of Me** - Deut. 18:18-19 is quoted by Peter (Acts 3:22) as a prophecy of Christ and also by Stephen in Acts 7:37. See also John 3:14 about the brazen serpent and John 8:56 about Abraham foreseeing Christ's day. Jesus does here say that Moses wrote concerning him. ([Word Pictures of the New Testament](#))

**Ryle on he wrote of Me** has an interesting remark - There is probably a depth of meaning in the Pentateuch that has never yet been fully fathomed. We shall probably find at the last day that Christ was in many a chapter and many a verse, and yet we knew it not. There is a fulness in all Scripture far beyond our conception. ([John 5 Commentary](#))

### John 5:47 "But if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe My words?"

BGT John 5:47 ε ὃ το ς κε νου γρ μωσιυ ο πιστε ετε, τι ς το ς μο ς μωσιυ πιστε σετε;

KJV John 5:47 But if ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe my words?

NET John 5:47 But if you do not believe what Moses wrote, how will you believe my words?"

CSB John 5:47 But if you don't believe his writings, how will you believe My words?"

ESV John 5:47 But if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe my words?"

NIV John 5:47 But since you do not believe what he wrote, how are you going to believe what I say?"

NLT John 5:47 But since you don't believe what he wrote, how will you believe what I say?"

NRS John 5:47 But if you do not believe what he wrote, how will you believe what I say?"

NJB John 5:47 but if you will not believe what he wrote, how can you believe what I say?

NAB John 5:47 But if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe my words?"

YLT John 5:47 but if his writings ye believe not, how shall ye believe my sayings?"

- Lu 16:29,31
- [John 5 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**But** - Term of contrast. What is Jesus contrasting? Belief and unbelief in Moses' writings and in Jesus and His words.

**If you do not believe** ([pisteuo](#)) **his** (Moses') **writings** ([gramma](#)), **how will you believe** ([pisteuo](#)) **My words** ([logos](#))? **If** is a first class conditional, assumed true. Note Jesus again (also Jn 5:46) affirms Moses was a writer of the Scriptures (He does not say which



ones here - [See Moses as writer of the Pentateuch](#)) (cf Lk 24:27, 44). To not believe Moses' prophecies of the coming Messiah meant they would not believe in Jesus words for He claimed to be the fulfillment of Moses' words.

**Ryle** - If you do not really believe what your own honoured lawgiver Moses WROTE,—and it is plain that you do not,—it is not likely that you will believe what I SAY. If you have no real faith in the things written in your Scriptures by that very Moses, for whom you profess such reverence, your favourite teacher and lawgiver, it is not to be wondered at that you have no faith in what I say, and that I speak to you in vain.”....In concluding the notes on this wonderful chapter, one would like to know how this marvellous address was received by those who heard it. But here we meet with one of the peculiar “silences” of Scripture. Not one word is written to tell us what the Jews of Jerusalem thought of our Lord’s argument, or what effect it had upon them. Our own duty is clear. Let us take heed that it has some effect on ourselves. The amazing fulness of our Lord’s teaching appears most strikingly in the address contained in this chapter. Within the short span of twenty-nine verses, we find no less than eleven mighty subjects brought forward: (1.) The intimate relation of the Father and the Son (2.) The divine commission and dignity of the Son. (3.) The privileges of the man who believes. (4.) The quickening of the spiritually dead. (5.) The judgment. (6.) The resurrection of the body. (7.) The value of miracles. (8.) The Scriptures. (9.) The corruption of man’s will the secret of man’s ruin. (10.) The love of man’s praise the cause of unbelief. (11.) The importance of the writings of Moses. ([John 5 Commentary](#))

**Leon Morris** - just as they misunderstood the Scriptures in general, so they perverted the writings of Moses in particular. *“The law of Moses is not a religion of salvation, it is the categorical imperative of God by which men are accused and exposed as sinners”* (E C Hoskyns [The Fourth gospel](#) - borrow). Had they really paid heed to Moses they would have been convicted of their sin and eager to recognize the Savior. If they had really believed (notice the change from “set your hope” of the previous verse) what Moses said they would have believed what Jesus said, too. Moses’ writings were prophetic. They pointed forward to Christ (cf. Jn 1:45). Therefore those who rejected the Christ did not really believe what Moses had written. And if these people who professed to be Moses’ disciples, who honored Moses’ writings as sacred Scripture, who gave an almost superstitious reverence to the letter of the law, if these people did not really believe the things that Moses had written and which were the constant objects of their study, then how could they possibly believe the words, the spoken words of Jesus? ([The Gospel according to John - BORROW](#))

It is interesting that John records no answer or rebuttal from the Jewish leaders. One thing is certain as subsequent events proved -- they knew what He had said about them and they begin seething inside!

Abraham in the cool side of Sheol said to the rich man on the hot side of Sheol "If they do not listen to Moses and the Prophets, they will not be persuaded even if someone rises from the dead." (Luke 16:31+)

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**Swindoll** applies this last section with some very practical thoughts - Despite this (THE WITNESSES JESUS PRESENTED) and other irrefutable evidence proving Jesus’ deity, the Pharisees remained intractable. Jesus gave two reasons for this. (1) They simply didn’t want to believe in Him. They had already determined how they wanted the world to be, so they received only those facts that supported their worldview. (2) They preferred their pride. Their self-importance blinded them to anything that didn’t place them in control of their own destinies. Be on the lookout for such people as you move through life! Some are genuinely curious about Jesus Christ, and their questions can become an opportunity to lead them to faith in Him (1 Peter 3:15). But don’t be fooled. Not every debate about spiritual matters is prompted by curiosity; more often than not, religious debate is merely the ruse of the rebellious. Just as people did with Jesus, some will seek you out for no other purpose than to challenge the truth rather than to understand and believe. It’s part of a clever game they play with themselves. Their purpose for debating a believer is to pretend they have good reason to remain on their present course; if the Christian cannot refute their objections or offer a compelling reason to believe in Christ, they don’t feel obligated to submit control of their lives to anyone else. In reality, they cannot tolerate your firm belief that God, not humanity, controls the destiny of the universe.

By the end of the debate, the Christian feels exhausted and the rebel feels vindicated ... for a while. Soon, he or she compulsively engages another unwary believer, driven by the same need as a boy whistling past the graveyard. Here are a few ways to know when a rebel wants to play “convert-me-if-you-can.”

- The person challenges you with a negative opinion about God, or some other theological concern, and then expects you to talk him or her out of it. (God doesn’t care about people or He would end all suffering.)
- The person presents a philosophical conundrum that has no definite answer. (What about the Pygmies who were never told about God?)
- The person presumes to judge the goodness of God by human standards, especially his or her own. (I can’t believe in a God who would send someone to hell.)
- The person tries to convince you that your faith is irrational or that God does not exist.
- The person shifts the conversation to another issue whenever you begin making headway on the first.
- The person becomes angry and belligerent or resorts to name-calling.
- The person wants to compare qualifications or casts doubt on yours.

If you suspect you're in a debate with a rebel, politely end the conversation. You might even offer your reason for cutting it short. The temptation to continue can be enticing, but trust me on this; never once have I seen someone argued into the kingdom. At best, you can argue to a stalemate because, with a rebel, the challenge is not the intellect; it's the will. If you must leave him or her with something, then let it be a testimony of your own experience. Few people can refute that. By contrast, genuinely curious people listen rather than argue. They question rather than challenge. They are receptive and humble, not argumentative and brash. They accept that some questions cannot be answered adequately and they respect the occasional "I don't know." They respond positively to empathy, while rebels are unaffected by compassion. And, best of all, with genuinely curious people, the conversation naturally flows into a presentation of the gospel. Not everyone acts upon the good news right away, but those who want to know the truth will at least hear it without a fight. No conversation should feel exhausting. Refuse to participate in one that does. (Borrow [Insights on John](#))