

15. Jesus Taught that He Is Equal with the Father

In our last topic, we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to share the Word of God and not the traditions of men. We saw the religious traditions of the leaders of the Jewish religion in Jerusalem were more important to them than the Word of God. As a result, they began to actively oppose Jesus and their desire to kill Jesus also began at this time. In our topic today, we will see that Jesus taught that He is equal with the Father. This gave the Jews an even stronger desire to kill Him.

Although Jesus knew that some of the Jews had a strong desire to kill Him because of healing on the Sabbath, Jesus used the opportunity to talk about His relationship to the Father. In John 5:17-18 we read, “But Jesus answered them, ‘My Father has been working until now, and I have been working.’ Therefore the Jews sought all the more to kill Him, because He not only broke the Sabbath, but also said that God was His Father, making Himself equal with God.” The Jews were upset that Jesus had healed on the Sabbath. However, what He said in these verses caused the Jews to become even more upset. Jesus said that His Father had been working from the beginning of time until now. Needless to say, since God holds the whole creation together, this work is continuous.

Paul wrote in Colossians 1:15-19, “He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him. And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist. And He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the preeminence. For it pleased *the Father* that in Him all the fullness should dwell.” Here, we see that these verses make the statement that Jesus is before all things and by Him all things consist or are held together. Here, in John, Jesus said that He has been working since the creation just as the Father has been working. The Jews immediately understood what Jesus said.

They knew that Jesus was claiming to be God and equal with the Father. This gave those Jews and even stronger desire to kill Jesus. We will see that Jesus claimed to be from the Father throughout the book of John. Each time Jesus made that statement, the Jews became more determined to kill Him. John had already written in John 1:14, “And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.” Then, John the Baptist gave testimony of that fact. John 1:34 says, “‘And I have seen and testified that this is the Son of God.’” In John 2:16, Jesus said that God was His Father to the people in the temple at Jerusalem. That verse says, “And He said to those who sold doves, ‘Take these things away! Do not make My Father’s house a house of merchandise!’” Jesus told Nicodemus in John 3:13, “‘No one has ascended to heaven but He who came down from heaven, *that is*, the Son of Man who is in heaven.’” Now, Jesus was back in Jerusalem; and again, He told the Jews that He is the Son of God. We will see Jesus continues to say the same thing throughout the book of John.

Jesus also said that because He is from God He is able to give life to whom He chooses. John

5:19-21 says, “Then Jesus answered and said to them, ‘Most assuredly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He sees the Father do; for whatever He does, the Son also does in like manner. For the Father loves the Son, and shows Him all things that He Himself does; and He will show Him greater works than these, that you may marvel. For as the Father raises the dead and gives life to *them*, even so the Son gives life to whom He will.’” Jesus made it very clear that He did not work in opposition to the Father. In fact, everything that He did was in agreement with the Father. He said that He did nothing of His own will.

Here, we see that in the Trinity it is the Father that exercises the will. We saw in Chapter One that the Father willed the creation and the Son spoke the creation into existence as He carried out the will of the Father. Here, Jesus said that whatever the Father does the Son does the same things. This meant that the fact that Jesus healed on the Sabbath happened because He was carrying out the will of the Father. It also meant that Jesus was equal with the Father. We will see that Jesus says in several different ways in this chapter that He is equal with the Father.

Jesus went on to say that the Father loves the Son. In addition, Jesus said that He shows Him all things that He Himself does. The word translated “shows”, in this verse, means *to give evidence or proof of a thing*. In John 10:30-32, Jesus used this same word when those verses say, “‘I and My Father are one.’” Then the Jews took up stones again to stone Him. Jesus answered them, ‘Many good works I have shown you from My Father. For which of those works do you stone Me?’” Jesus said that He had given evidence of the fact that He and the Father are one by the works that He had shown them. In fact, the stones were in their hands at that very moment. Jesus just asked them for which of those good works were they going to stone Him.

However, here, we see that Jesus went on to tell the Jewish religious leaders that He would do even greater works. Those works would cause them to be amazed but they would not cause the Jewish religious leaders to believe. Jesus then said that the Father raises the dead and gives life to them. Jesus said that He also had power to give life to whom He chose to give life. Jesus knew that He would be raising Lazarus from the dead just a few weeks before His own death. That would happen only about two miles from where these men were standing at that very moment. John 11:43-44 says, “Now when He had said these things, He cried with a loud voice, ‘Lazarus, come forth!’ And he who had died came out bound hand and foot with graveclothes, and his face was wrapped with a cloth. Jesus said to them, ‘Loose him, and let him go.’”

We see the response of the Jewish high priest to the resurrection of Lazarus in the next few verses. John 11:49-50 says, “And one of them, Caiaphas, being high priest that year, said to them, ‘You know nothing at all, nor do you consider that it is expedient for us that one man should die for the people, and not that the whole nation should perish.’” Then, John 11:53 adds, “Then, from that day on, they plotted to put Him to death.” John also explained why the religious leaders made that decision in John 12:37-40, where we read, “But although He had done so many signs before them, they did not believe in Him, that the word of Isaiah the prophet might be fulfilled, which he spoke: ‘Lord, who has believed our report? and to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed?’ Therefore they could not believe, because Isaiah said again: ‘He has blinded their eyes and hardened their hearts, lest they should see with their eyes, lest they should understand with their

hearts and turn, so that I should heal them.”

At the very time that they were rejecting Him, Jesus also told the people how to have everlasting life. John 5:22-24 says, “For the Father judges no one, but has committed all judgment to the Son, that all should honor the Son just as they honor the Father. He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent Him. Most assuredly, I say to you, 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.” Here, we see that the Father judges no one. Paul and Barnabas said in Acts 13:46, “Then Paul and Barnabas grew bold and said, ‘It was necessary that the word of God should be spoken to you first; but since you reject it, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, behold, we turn to the Gentiles.’” Here, we see that people reject themselves when they reject the eternal life that Jesus offers. They are responsible for their own choices.

Jesus said that those who honor the Father will also honor the Son. In contrast, those who reject the Son will also reject the Father who sent Him. That is why the Father has committed all judgment to the Son. The Father will one day make all those who reject Jesus on this earth honor Him. Philippians 2:9-11 says, “Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, and *that* every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.” Those who reject Him now will be forced to recognize that He did deserve their honor and they deserve the judgment for all who reject Jesus.

Jesus then explained what the future holds for those who choose to honor Jesus and receive Him while they are on this earth. Jesus said that those who believe are those who really hear His Word. That true belief causes them to also believe in the Father and that He sent Jesus to pay the penalty for sin. That day, Jesus promised three things to those who heard His Word and believed that the Father had sent Him. Jesus said that they would receive eternal life. John 3:17 says, “For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.” Jesus said that those who believed in Him would face no judgment. Romans 8:1 says, “*There is* therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit.” Then, Jesus said that those who believed passed from death to life. John 10:10 says, “The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly.” We want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to explain to others how they can receive that life by honoring Jesus and receiving Him while they are on this earth. We want them to be able to explain how to have that abundant life that Jesus died to provide. May the Lord richly bless you as you share with your children how to explain to others how to have eternal life.