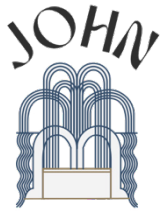


An Exposition of the
GOSPEL OF JOHN



“THE AUTHORITY OF JESUS CHRIST”

John 5:19-29

Theme: The authority of Christ Jesus guarantees eternal life to all who believe and condemnation to all who reject Him.

Introduction: Authority is not just a concept of earthly governance; it is at the very heart of divine revelation. In John 5, we step into a profound moment of conflict and clarity. Jesus has just healed a man on the Sabbath (vv. 1–18), provoking the fury of the Jewish leaders, not merely for breaking tradition, but for claiming equality with God. What follows is not a retreat or a defense, but a bold, divine declaration.

In this passage, Jesus unveils the nature and scope of His authority, not as an independent rival to the Father, but as the obedient and co-equal Son. Here, He reveals the inner workings of the Trinity and the stunning reality that the Son does nothing apart from the Father. He speaks with clarity and certainty, demonstrating that His authority is not borrowed or assumed—it is intrinsic to His divine person.

This authority is not abstract; it is deeply personal. It decides who lives and who dies. It separates those who honor the Son from those who dishonor the Father. It controls judgment, resurrection, and eternal destiny.

[Read the text] The theme of this section is: ***“The authority of Christ Jesus guarantees eternal life to all who believe and condemnation to all who reject Him.”***

As we walk through this rich and sobering passage, we’ll consider:

1. **The Foundation for His Authority** – how Jesus’ unity with the Father affirms both His mission and identity (vv. 19–20).
2. **The Fullness of His Authority** – how the Son shares in the sovereign acts of giving life and executing judgment (vv. 21–23).
3. **The Fulfillment of His Authority** – how this authority calls for a present response and points to future resurrection and reckoning (vv. 24–29).

The question we all must face is this: **How do we respond to the authority of Jesus?** Do we submit to Him as the Life-Giver and Judge? Let this text reframe your understanding of who Christ is—and stir both reverence and faith as we behold the One to whom all judgment has been entrusted.

I. The Foundation for His Authority – 5:19-20

A. The Interrelating Wills of the Godhead – v. 19

1. In the previous section, Jesus had upset the sensitivities of the religious

legalists by claiming to be equal with the Father in His authority over the Sabbath.

2. His claim to possess the same rights as the Father over the Sabbath had so infuriated these hypocrites that they were *“... seeking all the more to kill Him”*
3. In v. 19, we are told that because of their hostile reactions, He proceeded to further clarify His authority – *“Therefore Jesus answered and was saying to them ...”*
4. He emphasizes the reality of His statements by introducing them with a strong affirmation: *“Truly, truly, I say to you ...”*
5. He then describes a relationship between Himself and the Father that is so interconnected that there is never any thought of independence from each other – *“the Son can do nothing of Himself, unless it is something He sees the Father doing.”*
6. That means there is perfect alignment between the priorities and actions of the Father and those of the Son.
7. This is not a reference to any limitation in His abilities or person, but merely a reference to His will – it is inextricably connected to the Father so that there is no independent desire or impulse whatsoever.
8. He follows up and declares: *“... for whatever the Father does, these things the Son also does in like manner.”*
 - a) *The immediate reference is to the work of sustaining creation even through the Sabbath.*
 - b) *However, it extends to all matters and activities of the Godhead – there is a singular will.*
 - c) *If this were not the case, then there would be some essential difference between the 1st Person and the 2nd Person of the Godhead.*
 - d) *However, this statement by Jesus reveals an essential unity in the character of the Godhead – there is only one God, not three. (Trinitarianism).*

B. The Intimate Relationship of the Godhead – v. 20

1. This Trinitarian interrelationship is completely intimate – there is no way the Father and the Son could be any closer or intimate.
2. Jesus states that the reason for this interrelationship of will is because *“the Father loves the Son, and shows Him all things that He Himself is doing.”*
 - a) *In that the Father “shows Him all things,” it demonstrates that there is no restraint or constraint in this relationship.*
 - b) *There is perfect openness and transparency between the Father and the*

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Son – nothing is hidden or privileged.

- c) *However, as a man, he models for us the utter dependency upon the guidance received from the Father – even as we must – hence the use of the present tense “shows” [lit. “is showing”] & “is doing.”*
 - d) *Thus, although as God He knew the Father’s will, as the surrendered Man, He constantly looked for guidance and lived day to day in utter dependence upon His Father.*
- 3. Jesus continues to elevate the issue higher and higher – bringing to greater intensity the offense of these religious hypocrites: *“and greater works than these will He show Him, so that you will marvel.”*
 - 4. The intimacy between the Father and Son will result in the Father showing Him *“greater works than these,”* and as a result, the people *“will marvel.”*
 - 5. What are these *“greater works than these”*? – it is not merely that the miracles that He would perform (such as the raising of Lazarus & the feeding of the 5,000) would increase in their capacity to *“marvel,”* but that His *“greater works”* will be as judge of all men and Savior of those who come to Him in faith – These would be even *“greater.”*

II. The Fullness of His Authority – 5:21-23

A. The Authority to Provide Life – v. 21

- 1. The authority of our Lord extends beyond some limited application – it extends to the very most fundamental issue facing creation – the matter of redemption.
- 2. Here, Jesus teaches that the work of redemption is up to the Sovereign will of the Father – *“For just as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, even so the Son also gives life to whom He wishes.”*
- 3. This does not mean that the Father saves whoever He wishes and the Son whoever He wishes, but that the combination of the two groups shows the unity of the Godhead and makes up the host of the redeemed.
- 4. No, what this teaches is that the exercise of Sovereignty in redemption is just as much His work and will as it is the Father’s – that they agree on every sinner saved by grace.
- 5. Thus, His authority extends to the Divine prerogative of redemption.

B. The Authority to Judge – vv. 22-23

- 1. It isn’t only that He has the authority to save whomever He wishes, but his authority extends to the judgment of those who remain devoted to their

sin.

2. He says, *“For not even the Father judges anyone, but He has given all judgment to the Son.”*
3. The Son has been given the authority to judge men – cp. *Matthew 25:31-46.*
4. It is then the work of the Son of God, Jesus Christ, to judge men for both the degrees of blessing or condemnation they are to receive.
5. The reason that the Father has committed this responsibility exclusively to the Son is so that all men might honor Him – *“so all will honor the Son even as they honor the Father.”* – cp. *Philippians 2:9-11.*
6. He then indicts the legalists who were dishonoring Him by accusing Him of blasphemy and breaking the Sabbath – *“He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent Him.”* – cp. v. 18.

III. The Fulfillment of His Authority – *5:24-29*

A. The Provision of Eternal Life – *vv. 24-26*

1. Having declared the extent to which His authority extends, Jesus challenges men to recognize their accountabilities.
2. He states that because He is free to grant forgiveness to sinners who come to Him in faith, they ought to have confidence: *“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 unto life.”*
3. Thus, those who have eternal life and whose lives have been changed so as to be converted enjoy these blessings because they have believed in Him and the fact that the Father has sent Him to redeem them through His work.
4. Jesus indicates that eternal life is already the possession of those who believe in Him – *“Truly, truly, I say to you, and hour is coming and now is, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live.”*
5. This is a double reference to two events – one is coming, and the other *“now is”* –
 - a) *The coming event is the future judgment when God raises the dead from their graves at the rapture and then again at the beginning of the Millennial Kingdom.*
 - b) *The event that “now is” refers to the work of redemption when the spiritually “dead” are being quickened in faith – cp. *Ephesians 2:4-6.**

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6. The source of this eternal life bestowed by Christ is not something He has to acquire from some external source – but it is inherent in His essence – He IS Life: *“For just as the Father has life in Himself, even so He gave to the son also to have life in Himself”* – cp. John 1:4; John 11:25.

B. The Pronouncement of Judgment – vv. 27-29

1. However, to those who reject Him, He is not hesitant to judge them for their dishonoring Him – *“and He gave Him authority to execute judgment, because He is the Son of Man.”*
 - a) Notice the reference to *“the Son of Man.”*
 - b) It is because the Son of God had become clothed with flesh and walked this earth as Man, that He was despised and rejected and His Divine glories disowned that all men will be judged by Him for their rejection – cp. John 1:10-11.
2. He then addresses in a general way the events surrounding the final judgment, when *“all who are in the tombs will hear His voice, and will come forth”* to one of two results – cp. Daniel 12:2:
 - a) *“those who did good deeds to a resurrection of life”* – a reference to the reward and bliss that awaits those who possess faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.
 - (1) Initially, this occurs at the Rapture of the Church – 1 Thessalonians 4:15-16.
 - (2) For Israel, this occurs at the beginning of the Millennium – Revelation 20:4.
 - b) *“those who committed the evil deeds to a resurrection of judgment”* – a reference to the act of judgment whereby sinners are condemned eternally.
3. All men will face the judicial work of Christ – either that of condemnation (outside of Christ) or acquittal (in Christ by faith).
4. Which work of the Judge of all men will you face?

So What?

1. How does Jesus’ total dependence upon the Father challenge my responses to God?
2. What does it look like in my life to honor Christ as I honor the Father?
3. What hope or despair does knowing that Jesus is the judge bring out in me?
4. How does the promise of a future resurrection motivate me to pursue righteousness today?

Theme: The authority of Christ Jesus guarantees eternal life to all who believe and condemnation to all who reject Him.