

20. The claims of Jesus

February 4, 2011

To claim who I am, I have to show the evidences of my identity with my photo to whoever wants to know. I have my passport from the State Department of the United States of America, Arizona Driver License from the Department of Motor Vehicle of Arizona, and a photo ID as a chaplain from Pima County Sheriff's Department. These IDs will help me declare my identity because they are backed by our local and federal government – much higher authorities than myself.

By the way, did you notice that your driver license photo always comes out horrible? Some of you are thinking, "In your case, pastor, your driver license photo came out as is." Ha, ha. That's cold, really cold, you know that?

The Jewish leaders did not like what was happening at the Pool of Bethesda as we learned at the beginning of chapter 5. A Rabbi from some hick town of Galilee showed up and healed a man who had been sick thirty-eight years and told him to pick up his bed and walk on the Sabbath. They thought, "What an audacity, what a rebellious attitude against all the rules of the Sabbath we've made!" They did not want this Man to continue in His way.

But they had no idea where this Man was taking them with the claims of His true identification. They were about to find out as we will this morning.

A. WHAT A LOUSY REASON!

John 5:16 For this reason the Jews persecuted Jesus, and sought to kill Him, because He had done these things on the Sabbath.

That's it. Not revolting, murdering people with a machine gun, or a massive Ponzi Scheme – just telling the man who just got healed from his long sickness with God's miracle to get up and carry his bed on the Sabbath. We all are astounded by the pure evil, yet silly motive of these religious leaders.

But we must think about the true reason behind their extreme anger. With their man-made religious rules and regulations by using God's name and one of His Ten Commandments, the Pharisees and the other religious rulers of the ancient Israel could not only control every aspect of people's lives in that nation, but also allowed themselves to be in the position of the completely unchallengeable authority which gave them total selfish satisfaction and pride. This has nothing to do with the glory of God, but their own.

Out of blue Someone dared to challenge them. It is no wonder that they were thinking about killing Him.

Now we are going to see six claims of Jesus' identity to the Jews.

B. THE FIRST CLAIM – EQUALITY WITH THE FATHER

John 5:17-20 But Jesus answered them, "My Father has been working until now, and I have been working." 18 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. 19 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. 20 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.

I am so glad that the Father in heaven is working and Jesus is working without a day off or a vacation day.

Psalm 121:4 Behold, He who keeps Israel Shall neither slumber nor sleep.

Can you imagine what could happen if the Lord our God says, "OK, I am bushed. I am going to take a vacation and not do anything." Since He is the One who keeps everything in order including the universe, while He does nothing, the planets and the Milky Ways are going to spin out of control like our national debt; crashing into one another. If that is not bad enough, our bodies' DNAs will start to fall apart, because He is the One who holds all of our molecules.

Colossians 3:17 He is before all things, and in him all things hold together.
NIV

Then some will say, "Nay, nay, nay. In Genesis 2:2, God rested on the seventh day." I am glad that you've noticed that. God's rest on the seventh day was given for man's benefit, not for God, demonstrating a pattern of rest necessary for man's well being.

What Jesus said in v17 was not missed by the enemies of Jesus. The Israelites traditionally called God, "our Father," never "My Father." However, Jesus never refers to God as "our Father," but always "My Father."

Then some will say, "Ah ha, gotcha! You are wrong here, preacher. In the Lord's Prayer from Matthew 6:9, Jesus started, 'Our Father in heaven, Hallowed be Your name'" I am glad that you said that. But in reality and in context, you are wrong. Because Jesus was teaching His disciples how to pray. The Lord's Prayer should have been called 'A Pattern of Prayer.'

Some of you may wonder where in the OT it mentions about 'Father and Son' of God head. Let me direct you to one of the most famous verses in the Bible:

Isaiah 9:6 For unto us a Child is born, Unto us a Son is given; And the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

I think that it is clear enough for us.

Jesus not only claims an equal relationship with God in v17 and 18, but also He claims equality in the work They share in v 19 and 20.

Like a man and his shadow, which is neither identical to nor independent from one another, so God the Son and God the Father are distinct from one another, yet They are dependent on each other.

One more thing I want you to remember: Jesus is fully submitted to God the Father's will, by His own choice, not by coercion or by an inferior nature.

C. THE SECOND CLAIM – THE GIVER OF LIFE

John 5:21 For as the Father raises the dead and gives life to them, even so the Son gives life to whom He will.

To assert His equality, Jesus claims to have the same power the Father does over the spiritually dead. This was mentioned from the beginning of this Book.

John 1:3-4 All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made. 4 In Him was life, and the life was the light of men.

Many cult leaders or faith movement self-claimed miracle workers say that they heal people's sickness. But nobody claims to raise the dead. And no one has proof to back it up except the Lord Jesus.

D. THE THIRD CLAIM – THE FINAL JUDGE

John 5:22-23 For the Father judges no one, but has committed all judgment to the Son, 23 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.

Many "religious" people who say that they worship God, but deny the deity of Christ, truly believe neither the Father, nor the Son. Apart from Jesus Christ, we cannot know the Father, worship Him, or serve Him.

Acts 10:42 He commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that he is the one whom God appointed as judge of the living and the dead.

To the orthodox Jew, Jehovah God was the Judge of all the earth.

Genesis 18:25 Far be it from You to do such a thing as this, to slay the righteous with the wicked, so that the righteous should be as the wicked; far be it from You! Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?

And no one dared to apply this title to himself. But Jesus did! By claiming to be the Judge, He claimed to be God.

Two examples of denying the deity of Jesus are Jehovah's Witness and Mormons. They say that they believe in God, but they deny the fact that Jesus Christ is God Himself and only through Him we can be saved.

E. THE FOURTH CLAIM – GIVING ETERNAL SALVATION

John 5:24 "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.

Not only does Jesus claim to be the Final Judge, but He also claims to be the way out of the eternal damnation. Jesus mentions this in chapter 14 of this Book.

John 14:6 Jesus said to him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.

Some people would say that they don't agree with what the Bible says about Jesus being the exclusive way of salvation. At the same time, they believe that the Bible is God's Word and it speaks the truth. Then, we have a couple of situations that person must answer.

- 1) Which one is it? Is the Bible lying, or is that person wrong about the Bible speaking the truth?
- 2) If the Bible speaks the truth, but since the person is disagreeing with the Bible, does it mean that the person is wrong?

You cannot say that you have a different opinion than God who always is correct and the same time is your opinion. Either God is correct or you are correct. This is not a multiple choice to please everybody, since the Bible makes the way of salvation totally exclusive.

Not all roads lead to the same God. My God is not Allah, Buddha, Hare Krishna, nor some outer space alien with green glowing skin who looks like our Assistant Pastor Jack.

The Bible does not allow you to be in neutral mode.

Luke 11:23 He who is not with Me is against Me, and he who does not gather with Me scatters.

People like Oprah Winfrey would say that Christianity has a narrow mind. Yes, so does the truth. Relative truth is made by the people who want to hide behind lame excuses instead of facing the truth.

F. THE FIFTH CLAIM – GIVING RESURRECTIONS

John 5:25-29 Most assuredly, I say to you, the hour is coming, and now is, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God; and those who hear will live. 26 For as the Father has life in Himself, so He has granted the Son to have life in Himself, 27 and has given Him authority to execute judgment also, because He is the Son of Man. 28 Do not marvel at this; for the hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear His voice 29 and come forth-- those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation.

Here Jesus gives us some of the Bible's clearest information regarding resurrection.

Obviously the phrases like "dead will hear the voice" and "all who are in the graves will hear His voice" are metaphorical in context. It means 'spiritually dead person'. How are spiritually dead sinners raised from the dead? By hearing God's Word and believing in God's Son.

By the way, "everlasting life" in v24 means that they can never die spiritually again, nor can they ever come into judgment. To hear His Word and believe means salvation; to reject His Word means condemnation.

Keep in mind that resurrection is not reconstruction, nor resuscitation. It does not imply that God puts the pieces back together again. The resurrection body is a new body, a glorified body, suited to the new heavenly environment. Death is not the end for the believers of Jesus Christ.

However, for those who reject the salvation through Jesus Christ, there will be their own kind of resurrection – the resurrection of condemnation. In other words, they will be resurrected to receive the eternal punishment in hell with all the pain, suffering, and utter isolation from everyone including God. There is no purgatory, because it is never mentioned in the Bible.

G. THE SIXTH CLAIM – DOING THE WILL OF THE FATHER

John 5:30 I can of Myself do nothing. As I hear, I judge; and My judgment is righteous, because I do not seek My own will but the will of the Father who sent Me.

As a shadow never moves on its own initiative, so Jesus moves only in sync with God the Father.

Oh, how we need to be more like Jesus to do the will of our God the Father over ours!

H. APPLICATIONS

- 1) Jesus is equal with God the Father in relationship, His work, and life giving.
- 2) Jesus is the Final Judge and gives salvation according to individual's free will.
- 3) Jesus gives us resurrection and does the will of the Father.