

# John 5vs1-29

God at work

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# God at work

## John 5 vs 1-29

John 5 v 1 sees the start of a new section in John's Gospel.

This section - chs 5-10 - is all about the work of God and contains 2 big Sabbath events – John 5 and then John 9+10.

In both cases Jesus tells us that the signs are done in order to show us the work of God.

As we see Jesus miraculously break into his creation and put it right, so we shall see that his work is all about God rescuing his people, giving them new life and bringing them into his new Creation.

As John writes at the end of his Gospel:

Read John 20 vs 30-31: *Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.*

### **The Sabbath**

The sign of John 5 takes place on the Sabbath, but what was the Sabbath ...and what did it mean?

Answer: the word 'Sabbath' simply means 'REST'!

The Sabbath was one day in seven set apart for God's people to 'rest', just as God 'rested' on the seventh day of creation.

Why did God rest...did he get tired?!

NO! ...The Sabbath 'rest' was there to remind us that true life is about enjoying fellowship with God – in his perfect creation.

If we were to go back to Genesis 2 vs 1-4 we would see that God's 'rest' or 'Sabbath' was not inactive.

God didn't pull up his favourite armchair, put his feet up, and 'rest'..... because he was tired!! Rather he 'rested' from his work of creating ....and the next verses in Genesis 2 (vs 5-17) show why ....

- He was enjoying his perfect garden paradise (Eden)
- In perfect relationship with his perfect people!

Eden is: ....the ideal home, with the ideal couple, in an ideal world!

In short, 'rest' is the purpose of God's work.

BUT ....Adam and Eve rebelled against God ....and in consequence were shut out from this "rest" and the perfect relationship with God.

Hence ....in the remainder of the Old Testament the Sabbath has to do with looking forward to this perfect 'rest' being restored!

So the Sabbath was meant to be about:

- Enjoying a relationship with God
- Considering his Rescue - his Redemption - for the new Creation

Now let's look at this first incident that takes place on the Sabbath...

Read John 5 vs 1-18: *After this there was a feast of the Jews, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. <sup>2</sup> Now there is in Jerusalem by the Sheep Gate a pool, in Aramaic called Bethesda, which has five roofed colonnades. <sup>3</sup> In these lay a multitude of invalids—blind, lame, and paralysed. <sup>5</sup> One man was there who had been an invalid for thirty-eight years. <sup>6</sup> 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?" <sup>7</sup> 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." <sup>8</sup> Jesus said to him, "Get up, take up your bed, and walk." <sup>9</sup> And at once the man was healed, and he took up his bed and walked.*

*Now that day was the Sabbath. <sup>10</sup> 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." <sup>11</sup> But he answered them, "The man who healed me, that man said to me, "Take up your bed, and walk." <sup>12</sup> They asked him, "Who is the man who said to you, "Take up your bed and walk?" <sup>13</sup> 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. <sup>14</sup> Afterwards Jesus found him in the temple and said to him, "See, you are well! Sin no more, that nothing worse may happen to you." <sup>15</sup> The man went away and told the Jews that it was Jesus who had healed him. <sup>16</sup> And this was why the Jews were persecuting Jesus, because he was doing these things on the Sabbath. <sup>17</sup> But Jesus answered them, "My Father is working until now, and I am working."*

*<sup>18</sup> 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.*

NB: Some manuscripts, but not all, contain v 4, which reads as follows: '...waiting for the moving of the water; for an angel of the Lord went down at certain seasons into the pool, and stirred the water: whoever stepped in at first after the stirring of the water was healed of whatever disease he had.'

## The work of Jesus: restoring our broken world

How do these events pick up on what we know of the Sabbath?

- Jesus works – he heals the paralysed man and restores him to full health

What happens to the man paralysed for 38 years?

- The totally miraculous events of v9!!!!

v 9: ***And at once the man was healed, and he took up his bed and walked.***

So v 8 – TOTAL healing – How? What did Jesus do?

- ***Jesus said to him, “Get up, take up your bed, and walk.”***

We are back to understanding that this is the Creator God of John ch 1:

Read 1 vs 1-4: *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 He was in the beginning with God. 3 All things were made through him, and without him was not anything made that was made. 4 In him was life, and the life was the light of men.*

Let's look more closely at ch 5 vs 9-18:

Read 5 vs 9b-18: *Now that day was the Sabbath. 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.” 11 But he answered them, “The man who healed me, that man said to me, “Take up your bed, and walk.” 12 They asked him, “Who is the man who said to you, “Take up your bed and walk?” 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. 14 Afterwards Jesus found him in the temple and said to him, “See, you are well! Sin no more, that nothing worse may happen to you.” 15 The man went away and told the Jews that it was Jesus who had healed him. 16 And this was why the Jews were persecuting Jesus, because he was doing these things on the Sabbath. 17 But Jesus answered them, “My Father is working until now, and I am working.”*

*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.*

In ch 5 John clearly tells us it was the Sabbath... this means he wants us to see the significance of the Sabbath!

He shows us Jesus explaining that he is doing the Father's work on the Sabbath!

v 17: ***But Jesus answered them, "My Father is working until now, and I am working."***

How do you think the Jews come out of this encounter!?

Just look at their reaction:

v 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.***

This says that the Jews were prepared to break the very law that they were so indignant that He was breaking!!!

....They were even prepared to break one of the Ten Commandments!

All this flags up one of the major themes of this section – the rejection of God's work by the Jews.

NB When Jesus says to the man in v14, "***Sin no more, that nothing worse may happen to you***" he is not suggesting the paralysed man's condition was a result of his sin (we will see this when we get to ch 9). Rather, the man's illness is part of the general condition of men living in a fallen world (the 'something worse' of verse 14 is almost certainly a warning of final judgment, rather than some worse illness).

## **The job description...**

Read John 5 vs 19-29: *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. <sup>20</sup> 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. <sup>21</sup> For as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, so also the Son gives life to whom he will. <sup>22</sup> The Father judges no one, but has given all judgement to the Son, <sup>23</sup> that all may honour the Son, just as they honour the Father. Whoever does not honour the Son does not honour the Father who sent him. <sup>24</sup> Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life. He does not come into judgement, but has passed from death to life.*

*<sup>25</sup> “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. <sup>26</sup> For as the Father has life in himself, so he has granted the Son also to have life in himself. <sup>27</sup> And he has given him authority to execute judgement, because he is the Son of Man. <sup>28</sup> Do not marvel at this, for an hour is coming when all who are in the tombs will hear his voice <sup>29</sup> and come out, those who have done good to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil to the resurrection of judgement.”*

These verses contain 3 sections with each one introduced by Jesus words, “Truly, truly”.

The sections are : vs 19-23... vs 24... vs 25-29

v 24 is a summary verse:

***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.***

Taken together these verses show us:

- What the work of the Son is
- Why he has come to do this work
- When he will do what he has come to do
- How he does his work

## **What is the work of the Son?**

To do the work of the Father!

- He can do NOTHING of his own accord (v 19)
- He does ONLY what he sees the Father doing (v 19)
- WHATEVER the Father does he does (v 19)
- The Father shows him ALL that he is doing! (v 20)
- He has come to give life just as the Father does (v 21)
- He has come to judge on the Father’s behalf (v 22)
- Whoever does not honour the Son does not honour the Father (v 23)
  
- So how important does this make the Son? ....AND
- If we do not honour the Son what are we saying to God?!

LIFE AND JUDGEMENT ARE BOTH THROUGH THE SON – NO other option is given!!

As stated already verse 24 contains a summary of the key point of this chapter, and actually of chapters 5-10....It's a VITAL verse and therefore worth repeating!

v 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.”*

## Why has he come to do this work?

The work of the Son is to give life NOW.

- Notice the negative in v 24: **“does not come into judgement”**
- ...and the tense **“has passed from death to life.”**

So... believing in Christ means that we start Eternal Life NOW – we pass from Death to Life.

v 24 also describes the “natural condition” of men and women without Jesus:

DEAD.....and CONDEMNED

So if we don't believe...we have NOT passed from Judgement to TRUE (and eternal) Life with God our Maker ....we remain condemned!

This point has already been made in v 23:

5 v 23: *“...that all may honour the Son, just as they honour the Father. Whoever does not honour the Son does not honour the Father who sent him.”*

- If Jesus is God - as we have seen that he is - then my not honouring Jesus is evidence of my refusal to honour God
- Sin therefore is not about being a decent chap ... not murdering etc...
- BUT IT IS ALL ABOUT NOT **HONOURING THE SON!**
  - And all of us have failed to honour the Son
  - That's why we stand condemned by God... That's why we are spiritually dead.

Therefore, outside the work of God we stand condemned - we can't be good enough to be accepted by God. Being good enough is simply not good enough.

- Can a dead man help himself??
- Can a condemned man save himself??

NO – WE NEED HELP FROM OUTSIDE OF OURSELVES – CHRIST.

This is one of the clearest and biggest lessons of John's Gospel - what we have just read redefines what 'sin' is!

This is why Jesus has come to do the work he has come to do. Because on our own, we have earned spiritual death and we stand condemned.

## **When will he do what he has come to do?**

vs 25-29 lay out the time frame of Jesus' work - i.e. when he is going to do what...

So what do these verses tell us about what Jesus is doing NOW and what he will do SOON?!

NOW – He is giving LIFE...spiritual life - to the spiritually dead!

vs 25-26: ***“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. For as the Father has life in himself, so he has granted the Son also to have life in himself.”***

SOON – A day will come when he will summon ALL to judgement:

vs 27-28 ***“And he has given him authority to execute judgment, because he is the Son of Man. Do not marvel at this, for an hour is coming when all who are in the tombs will hear his voice.”***

Who will hear the voice of Jesus and be called to judgement?

- ALL means ALL! ....That includes :
  - relatives
  - business colleagues,
  - people from every religion
  - you and I
  - AND.....for all time.



## How does Jesus do this work?

Look again at vs 24, 25 + 28:

v 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.”***

v 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.”***

v 28: ***“Do not marvel at this, for an hour is coming when all who are in the tombs will hear his voice.”***

Jesus does his work both now as he gives us spiritual life with God and at a fixed point in the future when he will come to judge everyone.

How do we hear?

- HIS WORD

We are discussing sealing our eternal destiny...

- Hence the VITAL importance of studying his WORD!!

## Coming next...

Next time, we will be in the courtroom... looking at the evidence for these extraordinary claims of Jesus!

### John 5 vs 1-29

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