

Summary Sheet for John 5 vs 1-47

...to accompany Notes 11-12

GOAL of these 1-2-1 studies

Realise that Jesus is equal with God, doing the work of God and how we respond to him shows how we respond to God.

Context – how does this chapter fit in?

We're now starting a new section which runs from ch 5 through to ch 10. John arranges his material in the section around two miracles on the Sabbath (ch 5vs1-18 & ch 9). The main themes seem to be Jesus' identity, his work by his word and the response of the world. In ch2-4 we saw that Jesus has come to bring in the Messianic kingdom. We've also seen him challenged by the Jewish leaders. As we begin to understand Jesus' identity better, we also begin to see why the Jewish leaders reject. We see that Jesus claims to be nothing short of God on earth with the right to give life and judge. We cannot sit on the fence.

Impact on us

We should be convinced by the evidence to see the full extent of who Jesus is and what he's come to do. We should respond to his word to cross from death to life. We should also be taken aback and made to question why the Jewish leaders' respond so negatively.

How John writes to make his point

John gives details of the sign to illustrate that Jesus has come to do God's work of giving life and bringing judgement. John repeats references to the Sabbath and work to draw our attention to the fact that Jesus is the one who brings Sabbath rest. John draws attention to the clash between Jesus and the Jewish leaders to raise the questions in our mind – is Jesus right? Why do the Jews respond like this? In 18 – 30 the three 'Truly, Truly' sayings underline the magnitude of his explanation of why he could say v17. Jesus has come to do God's work of bringing life and judgement. Jesus' answer makes clear there is no middle ground when it comes to our response – you either honour God by accepting his Son Jesus or you oppose him. Then John takes us into the courtroom from v31 onwards by repeating words like 'testimony' and 'witness'. Will we see the evidence for Jesus' claim to equality with God and see the evidence against those who don't believe?

Structure

5vs1-9 – Jesus seeks out the lame to heal them on the Sabbath – proving he's God
5vs9b – 18 A controversy about the Sabbath, a clash with the Jewish leaders and a claim to be equal with God.
5vs19 – 30 Jesus explains how it is that he really is equal with God – the Son, doing the work of God
5vs30 – 47 Jesus defends himself and prosecutes his opponents

Potential trip hazards and red herrings

V4 is missing from the text. The sentence shown in the footnote in the ESV/NIV etc only appears in some manuscripts and is therefore probably inauthentic. Also, the words in this sentence are not words that John uses. (The fact that it is possible to spot errors like this gives us confidence in the authenticity of the Gospels.)

V14 This does not mean Jesus is saying there is always a causal link between sin and someone's physical disability. (See In John 9vs3 and in Luke 13vs1-5.) Given Jesus later shows he's the judge probably Jesus' point is that the 'something worse' is eternal judgement –which will follow if he continues in sin.

Was the man's response good or bad? There is no mention of his faith. There is no need to speculate. The point is about Jesus – who takes the initiative in the healing and gives proof of who he is and his work.

John's references to the Old Testament and why they matter

- Healing the invalid

John draws our attention to the fact that the man healed was an invalid amongst other invalids. John may be pointing out that Jesus is fulfilling Isaiah 35 which looks forward to a day when God will rescue His people, at which time 'the lame will leap like a deer' (35:3-7).

- Sabbath

The Sabbath was the day of 'rest' when God's people were meant to remember that they were both made by God (Exodus 20.8-11) and redeemed by God (Deuteronomy 5.12-15). Both great events pointed ahead to the ultimate realisation of his creation purposes (Gen 2.1-3). the 'rest' of his new creation However, for the Jews of Jesus' day, the Sabbath had become an end in itself. The keeping of the Sabbath rules and regulations was more important than the God of the Sabbath. They should have recognised, in Jesus' healing of the paralytic, the clear sign that the 'future rest' of the messianic age was at hand; instead, they quibbled about the keeping of rules.

-The Son of Man

From Daniel 7 we have already seen that the term 'Son of Man' speaks of Jesus' role as king after the final judgment. John has already added to that that He is the gateway to heaven (1:51; 3:15). Now further meaning is loaded into the title as we see the Son of Man as life-giver and judge who fulfils Daniel 12.2 and Ezekiel 37 by bring people to life and judgement through his voice.

Some questions to consider - vs 1-29

Opener: What would most people say is God's job?

Considering the text1: From vs1-18, what do we learn about Jesus through this miracle? What do we discover about the Jewish leaders? What questions are we left with, particularly by vs17-18?

Considering the text2: From vs19 -30, how does Jesus explain how he is right to claim equality with God? What does Jesus say about a) his relationship to the Father; b) what his work is; c) when he will do his work; and d) how he does his work?

Sum up: How important is Jesus and his work?How should we respond (v24)? How important is our response?

One to keep chewing on: Where do we see Jesus' work today?

...vs 30-47

Opener: What different reasons do people often give for not following Jesus?

Considering the text1: How do v30-32 follow on from the first half of chapter 5? What is Jesus backing up?

Considering the text2: What witnesses does Jesus call on in vs 32 - 39? How do they support his case?

Considering the text3: How does Jesus turn the tables on his questioners in vs37-47? What is their root problem?

Ones to keep chewing on: What do we make of the evidence for Jesus? How might we fall into the response of the Jewish leaders? Why is that so dangerous?