

John 5:19-23

So Jesus explained, “I tell you the truth, the Son can do nothing by himself. He does only what he sees the Father doing. Whatever the Father does, the Son also does.”²⁰ For the Father loves the Son and shows him everything he is doing. In fact, the Father will show him how to do even greater works than healing this man. Then you will truly be astonished.²¹ For just as the Father gives life to those he raises from the dead, so the Son gives life to anyone he wants.²² In addition, the Father judges no one. Instead, he has given the Son absolute authority to judge,²³ so that everyone will honor the Son, just as they honor the Father. Anyone who does not honor the Son is certainly not honoring the Father who sent him.

Background

In verse 19, Jesus is speaking to the Jewish leaders who were accusing Him of breaking the Sabbath by healing the paralyzed man at the pool of Bethesda. They were also angered because Jesus claimed equality with God in verse 17 by calling Him “My Father,” not “Our Father.” This asserted a unique relationship with God and a claim to deity. In verses 19–23, Jesus elaborates on His claim to be God. This showed the Jewish leaders that they did not misunderstand what the Lord said back in verse 17. It was indeed a claim to be God.

Teaching Points

1. Jesus claimed the attributes of God for Himself.

Jesus claimed He had the unique attributes of God: omniscience (all-knowing), omnipotence (all-powerful), and omnipresence (present everywhere). In verses 19–20, Jesus said He sees and does whatever the Father does, implying omniscience and omnipotence. His knowledge of all the Father's works shows that He knows all things; His ability to do all the Father does shows that He has divine power. While His reference to “seeing” what the Father does may hint at omnipresence, other Scriptures, such as Matthew 18:20, more clearly support this claim. In all, Jesus unmistakably claimed to possess God's attributes, affirming His deity.

2. Jesus claimed the activities of God for Himself.

Jesus claimed two divine activities which belong to God: giving life and judging all mankind. In verse 21, He says “*He gives life to anyone he wants,*” referring not just to physical life but eternal life (“*zoe*” in Greek). This was a clear claim to deity. In verse 22, Jesus states that He has the

“absolute authority to judge,” meaning He will judge all humanity. This is another divine role. These bold claims confirm that Jesus saw Himself as fully God.

Application

1. Do you worship a pagan god?

A pagan god is one of human invention. It's something or someone worshiped apart from the true God. In verse 23, Jesus says that *not* honoring the Son is equal to *not* honoring the Father. If you reject Jesus' divinity, you're not worshiping the God of the Bible, but a god of your own making. Beliefs that deny Jesus' full deity, like those held by Unitarians, Mormons, or Jehovah's Witnesses, fall into this category. To truly worship God, you must honor Jesus as God.