

A HARMONY OF THE GOSPELS
XL. Christ's Claim And Defense Of His Deity
(John 5:15-47)

I. Introduction

- A. One of the great battlegrounds of Church History has been the doctrine of the deity of Jesus Christ. In fact, "Jesus Christ's deity is what truly separates Christianity from a cult." (Gary L. Wall, "A catalogue of cults: Where they stand on the deity of Christ," Moody Monthly, July-August 1979)
- B. After Christ's healing of the paralytic at the Pool of Bethesda on the Sabbath Day, Jesus was confronted by the Jewish religious leaders of Jerusalem about his claim of deity in John 5:15-47.
- C. His theological argument is both extensive and compelling, and we view it for our instruction and edification:

II. Christ's Claim And Defense Of His Deity, John 5:15-47.

- A. Jesus' healing of the paralytic at the Pool of Bethesda on the Sabbath Day led to opposition from Israel's legalistic religious leaders, and Jesus used it as an opportunity to claim that He was God, John 5:15-18 et al.:
 - 1. Christ had told the paralytic to carry his bed, but since this order occurred on the Sabbath, it contradicted the legalistic tradition of the Pharisees that forbade the carrying on one's bed on the Sabbath, John 5:8-10.
 - 2. When the healed man told the religious leaders that Jesus had told him to carry his bed that day, the religious leaders sought to persecute Jesus for violating their view of the Sabbath prohibition, Jn. 5:11-16.
 - 3. Jesus defended His Sabbath violation by saying that God His Father was always at His work to that very day, and so He as the Son of God, and hence deity, was also working that Sabbath Day, John 5:17 NIV.
 - 4. This led the religious leaders to shift their concerns to Jesus' claim to be God, what to them was a more severe violation of the Law as they considered Him to be blaspheming by claiming to be God, John 5:18.
- B. In John 5:19-30, Jesus replied that the Father had invested His authority in Him to do the Father's works:
 - 1. Jesus explained that He did nothing of Himself, but that He performed only what His Father did since God the Father loved Him and showed the Son all that the Father does, John 5:19-20a.
 - 2. Indeed, the Father would show Him greater works than even the recent healing of the paralytic, for just as God the Father raises the dead, the Son of God would also give life to whomever He willed, Jn. 5:20b-21.
 - 3. God the Father had decided not to judge anyone, but to deliver all judgment of men to the Son that all men might honor the Son just as they had honored God the Father, John 5:22-23.
 - 4. Jesus added that whoever hears His word of salvation and believes in Him has eternal life and will not be judged but has crossed over from death to life in unconditional salvation security, John 5:24.
 - 5. The time is coming and had indeed come that the spiritually dead who heard the voice of the Son of God would live, for as God the Father has life in Himself, so He had granted God the Son to have life in Himself and authority to judge because He is the Son of Man, John 5:25-27.
 - 6. Jesus added that his hearers should not be amazed at the fact that the time would come when all who were in their graves would hear His voice and come out, those who have done good to eternal life and those who had done evil would be raised to eternal condemnation, John 5:28-29.
 - 7. Jesus added that by Himself He did nothing, but that He judged only as He received instruction from the Father, that His judgment was just, for He did not please Himself, but the Father Who sent Him, v. 30.
- C. Jesus then told of five other witnesses besides His own witness of Himself as to His deity, Jn. 5:31-39, 45-47:
 - 1. John the Baptist, considered a man of God in Israel, said that Jesus was God's Son, John 5:31-35; 1:32-34.
 - 2. Jesus' miracles that fulfilled prophecy of His coming from God in Isaiah 35:4-6 testified of Him, Jn. 5:36.
 - 3. God the Father at Jesus' baptism had testified that Jesus was His Son, John 5:37-38 with Matthew 3:17.
 - 4. The Old Testament that predicted the God Incarnate Messiah (cf. Isaiah 9:6) testified of Him, John 5:39.
 - 5. Moses whom the religious leaders respected had testified of Christ in Deuteronomy 18:15-22, Jn. 5:45-47.
- D. In John 5:40-44, Jesus noted that regardless of these credible witnesses about Him by other entities, his listeners still would not trust in Him to be saved, for they were at enmity with the Father who had sent Him.

Lesson: *Jesus claimed to be the Son of God Who performed the works of His Father on the Sabbath Day, that He gave life and judged mankind, the works of the Father that the Father had given Him to do. Other sources that testified that Jesus was God were John the Baptist, Jesus' miracles, God the Father's own public statement to Israel, Old Testament prophecies of the Incarnate Messiah's arrival and the great Hebrew prophet Moses.*

Application: *May we believe in the deity of Jesus Christ and heed His great example of following the Father's will.*