

Returning this morning to our study through the gospel of John. We are in the middle of chapter 5 and Jesus' sermon defending His actions on the Sabbath and demonstrating His equality with God.

As we looked at, the turning point in this chapter is 5:18, **“18 For this reason therefore the Jews were seeking all the more to kill Him, because He not only was breaking the Sabbath, but also was calling God His own Father, making Himself equal with God.”**

Last week we talked about how, despite the clear meaning of this passage, some try to get around this language by claiming that “yes, the Jews drew this very conclusion from the words of Jesus, that is indeed why they were seeking to kill him, but they were *misinterpreting* what He meant.

He wasn't really claiming equality with God, that He and the Father are one in essence. That's just what they misunderstood Him to mean.

But that argument cannot hold any weight whatsoever. And the most convincing reason why, is how Jesus Himself responds to their conclusion.

By way of review from last week, beginning in verse 19, notice the inference: **“therefore...”**
“Therefore Jesus answered and was saying to them,”

So, in *response* to the Jewish leaders and the escalating persecution on account of Jesus breaking their Sabbath and claiming He was equal with God, here is how Jesus responded to them.

And what we don't see in verses 19 and following is this: “You guys got it all wrong. You misinterpreted what I meant. You're putting words in my mouth, you're taking my statements out of context and drawing unwarranted conclusions. I'm not claiming to be equal with God.”

No, rather than correcting their conclusion, instead He gives a little sermon *defending* his statement, defending his equality with the Father.

And we looked at 4 characteristics of the Son of God which demonstrate his deity:

The first one, His Divine Actions, verse 19. ¹⁹ Therefore Jesus answered and was saying to them, “Truly, truly I say to you, the Son can do nothing of Himself, unless *it is something He sees the Father doing; for whatever the Father does, these things the Son also does in like manner.*”

There is an unequivocal claim to deity. No one but God Himself can claim to do *everything* that the Father does.

It's very important to notice that this is not the language of *imitation*, as in the Son merely seeks to imitate the Father. This is rather the language of *duplication*. That is to say, equivalency.

The works of the Son correspond in all respects to the works of the Father. *Whatever* the Father does, the Son does. There is an equality and unity with the Father.

And so with this statement He is showing the Jewish leaders that the only way I could be guilty of sin, like breaking the Sabbath, is if the *Father* is guilty of sin.

We then looked at a second characteristic of the Son of God which demonstrates His deity: His Divine Awareness.

Verse 20, “For the Father loves the Son, and shows Him all things that He Himself is doing;”

The eternal and perfect love within the trinity serves as the reason for why the Father shows the Son all that He Himself is doing.

We attempted to illustrate this last week by noting that even when it comes to human relationships, whoever you love the most, you show the most to.

In other words, the more intimate and trusting and affectionate the relationship, the more you reveal. The more you give access to with regard to your home and personal life and details.

And with God and the love within the trinity, it is a perfect, holy, infinite love. And therefore, the Father keeps no secrets from the Son. There is no restraint, no limitations existing between them.

So, the Son has *comprehensive awareness* of the Father, which can only be true of someone who is God Himself.

Notice in the rest of verse 20 that this ongoing showing of the Father to the Son will continue.

“and the Father will show Him greater works than these, so that you will marvel.”

You’re going to marvel. You’re going to be dumbfounded, astonished, disturbed, as my ministry continues.

And it is *greater works* that are going to produce that. What will be a greater work than what Christ just did on the Sabbath, miraculously healing a man?

Well, many things, but the following verses indicate a few specifics. In verses 21-22, the Son will carry out the prerogatives of God Himself.

That brought us to a third characteristic of the Son of God which demonstrates His deity: His Divine Authority.

Notice verses 21: **“For just as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, even so the Son also gives life to whom He wishes.”** [[see Deut. 32:39 and Ezekiel 37:11 ff]]

Again, Jesus is making a *comparison of equivalency* here. Notice the language: **“For just as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, thus, even so, in the same way, the Son gives life to whom He wishes.”**

This is not the language of a mere prophet or apostle, who was used by God as an *instrument* in raising the dead and giving life.

A mere instrument has no will of its own. A mere instrument cannot determine how it is used.

That's why that last clause there in verse 21 is crucial: **"The Son gives life to whom He wishes."** [[same word in 1 Cor. 15:22]]

No mere instrument can say that. No mere instrument has the authority to determine who to give life to.

Next in verse 22, His divine authority is highlighted in his right to judge. Verse 22, **"For not even the Father judges anyone, but He has given all judgment to the Son,"**

Just as both the Father and the Son can rightly be referred to as the creator. Well, in the same way, God the Father can rightly be referred to as the judge, while the Son has been entrusted with carrying out that judgment.

God the Father judges through the Son. [[see Acts 17:30 ff, Philippians 2:8]]

And in this passage, there is a specific purpose for which God the Father has entrusted all judgment to God the Son.

We then looked at a fourth characteristic of the Son of God which demonstrates His deity: His Divine Adoration

Verse 23, "so that all will honor the Son even as they honor the Father.

And so, the Son is equal in activity with God. Equal in awareness of the things of God. Equal in the authority of God, and now verse 23 is simply the logical consequence.

The Son is equal *in honor* as well. The same esteem, reverence, worship, the adoration given to the Father, is the same esteem, reverence, worship, adoration that should be given to the Son.

Whatever the Father is worthy of to receive, the Son is likewise worthy of.

And this is not a suggestion, it's not optional, rather it is mandatory with the utmost severity of consequences.

End of verse 23, **"He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent Him."**

You honor the Son as equal to God, you get both the Son and the Father.
You reject the Son as equal to God, you also reject the Father. [[see John 15:23]]

We ended last week with the words of one author: “If our Savior here did not intend to teach that He ought to be worshipped and esteemed equal with God, it would be difficult to teach it by any other language.”

But Jesus’ sermon is not over yet. This morning we will continue in verses 24-29.

²⁴ “Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears My word, and believes Him who sent Me, has eternal life, and does not come into judgment, but has passed out of death into life.

²⁵ Truly, truly, I say to you, an 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 just as the Father has life in Himself, even so He gave to the Son also to have life in Himself;

²⁷ and He gave Him authority to execute judgment, because He is *the* Son of Man.

²⁸ Do not marvel at this; for an hour is coming, in which all who are in the tombs will hear His voice, ²⁹ and will come forth; those who did the good *deeds* to a resurrection of life, those who committed the evil *deeds* to a resurrection of judgment.

I want you to look back at those two grammatical markers - “truly truly” at the beginning of verse 24, and “truly truly” at the beginning of verse 25. We will use those as a guide for our outline this morning.

We’re going to look at two implications of Jesus’ equality with God.

**In verse 24, we will see that the Son *sets the terms* of eternal life
And in verses 25-29, we’ll see that the Son *summons the dead* unto life**

So let’s begin by looking at the first implication of Jesus’ equality with God. The Son sets the terms of eternal life.

Verse 24, “Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears My word, and believes Him who sent Me, has eternal life, and does not come into judgment, but has passed out of death into life.”

Again, that phrase shows up in Jesus’ language, “Truly, truly.” Stressing the idea of absolutely certainty.

And you might be thinking, “Well, aren’t all of His Words in that category? Does this mean that these “truly truly” statements are more reliable or more inspired or more important than the rest of Scripture?”

No, that’s obviously not what it means. Rather, this formula is used not only to get the audience to listen up and take heed, this is extremely important, but it’s also is going to challenge something about a commonly held belief of the day.

In some cases, it may even be brand new information. And therefore startling to hear.

As is the case with what comes next, notice, **“Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears My word, and believes Him who sent Me, has eternal life,**

Now, this statement here in verse 24 is an expansion of what was just said in verse 21, where the Son **“gives life to whom He wishes.”**

The next time the reference to “life” shows up is right here in verse 24. Notice the two references to life: **“eternal *life*.”** And then at the end, **“has passed out of death into *life*.”**

So the immediate reference to the Son giving life to whom He wishes, is spiritual life, as verse 24 makes clear.

What we are seeing in verse 24 is *who* receives this life from the Son and *how*?

Notice verse 24, **“He who hears my word and believes Him who sent me ...”**

Now, I’ll spare you the technical details here, but if you’re interested in a further explanation, you can certainly see me afterwards about it. [[Granville Sharp Rule – Wallace pg. 275 – one article modifying multiple substantives]]

But this clause in the Greek text is constructed in such a way that the “hearing” and “believing” are not two separate ideas, but very closely related.

In fact, we could think of these ideas as two sides of the same coin. They may be distinguishable, but they are inseparable.

Here’s the significance of that in this particular passage: there is no one who “hears my word” who doesn’t “believe Him who sent me.” The one who hears, believes.

This means that the “hearing” here is not the general hearing of merely being exposed to the Word of Christ.

Rather, this is the “hearing” of receiving/accepting. It means hearing with the heart, hearing with faith.

Let me show you how this is used in John’s gospel. One place in particular that is helpful to see this is John 8.

8:42, “Jesus said to them, “If God were your Father, you would love Me, for I proceeded forth and have come from God, for I have not even come on My own initiative, but He sent Me. 43 Why do you not understand what I am saying? It is because you cannot *hear* My word.”

But they were hearing it, even audibly in this particular case. They were listening to it.

So why does He says “you cannot hear My word?” Well, He’s speaking *volitionally*. As in, you are unable and unwilling to receive the truth.

Why can’t they *hear* in this sense? He explains it next in verse 44, “**44 You are of your father the devil, and you want to do the desires of your father. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth because there is no truth in him. Whenever he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own nature, for he is a liar and the father of lies. 45 But because I speak the truth, you do not believe Me. 46 Which one of you convicts Me of sin? If I speak truth, why do you not believe Me?**

Here it is again in verse 47, “**He who is of God hears the words of God; for this reason you do not hear them, because you are not of God.**”

Again, clearly not referring to being exposed to the Word or even hearing it audibly in this case. Rather, this is hearing and heeding. Hearing and receiving.

Let me show you one more in John 10:27, “**My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me.**”

The hearing in this passage is accompanied by Christ knowing them, and them following Christ. The hearing is a spiritual hearing, unique to the true believer.

Back to our text in 5:24, this is hearing of *heeding* and *receiving* and *following*.

Notice the object of the hearing in verse 24, “My Word.”

The Son sets the terms. You can’t be right with God, you can’t have eternal life, while at the same time rejecting the Word of Christ.

Remember from last week: Anything Jesus did or said is only what the Father has given him to do or say.

So the word of Jesus *is* the word of the Father, it is the word of God.

Now, notice the second part of the verse 24, “**and believes Him who sent me.**”

We have spent considerable time in the previous sections in John talking about the meaning of faith or believing.

And so I’ll just make one comment on it here as I saw a helpful definition of belief by John MacArthur. He defines it this way:

“A God-given conviction that the promise of resurrection life, forgiveness of sins, and eternal heaven through Jesus Christ is true.”

It is not merely agreeing with information, but a conviction, a persuasion in the truth that radically shapes one's life.

Interestingly, the object of faith here is not Jesus, but the one who sent Him. The Father.

And this certainly isn't to indicate that believing in Jesus is not appropriate. We've already seen that, even in the most famous passage in the entire Bible, John 3:16:

16 “For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.”

Jesus is certainly the object of faith. Trusting in Christ alone is a core truth of the gospel message.

So why in verse 24 does Jesus Himself put forth *the Father* as the object of faith?

First of all, remember, as we've been seeing in this gospel, to believe in the Father is to believe in the Son, and vice versa. [[John 14:1]]

But second of all, remember the context here: Jesus is demonstrating the unity and equality of Himself with the Father.

The words and deeds of the Son are the words and deeds of the Father. Even in this passage He is showing the relationship:

Notice “Whoever hears my words...” so you must receive and accept me. “and believes Him who sent me.” You must believe in the Father as well.

It's not either or, it's a both/and. He is showing the Jewish leaders that you cannot believe in the Father without accepting/receiving the words of the Son.

Take a look at John 12:44, “**And Jesus cried out and said, “He who believes in Me, does not believe in Me but in Him who sent Me.”**”

He is not saying that the one who believes in me does not believe in me. That's contradictory in itself.

Rather, what it means is that all who are putting their trust in Him, would find that they are not only trusting in Him, but also in the Father.

To trust in the Son, is to trust in the Father who sent Him.

It's the same idea back in our passage: The Son and the Father are distinguishable, but cannot be divided or separated from one another.

Returning to verse 24, notice what is true of the one who hears my word and believes Him who sent me – **he has eternal life,**

Notice, this is a present reality. He doesn't *wait* to receive eternal life upon death. No, as soon as one believes, they come into possession of eternal life.

As we've talked about before in John's gospel, this is a phrase including both the *quality* of existence and the *quantity* of existence.

Both the *duration* of life, eternal, with no end. And the *nature* of that life. Knowing God in Christ.

That eternal life begins the moment one believes.

Notice what is true of a person who has eternal life - end of verse 24, "**and does not come into judgment, but has passed out of death into life.**"

That judgment does not mean there is no future evaluation of the person who has eternal life. It does not mean that they no longer will face any kind of assessment or evaluation upon death.

As we're going to see, we don't even need to go out of this passage to demonstrate this. Skip down to verse 29 and you'll notice that there is clearly a future judgment, a future evaluation for both the believer and unbeliever.

Those who did the good deeds to a resurrection of life, those who committed the evil deeds to a resurrection of judgment. Both are judged in the sense that their deeds, their works are evaluated.

That's not what the judgment in verse 24 is referring to. This is the judgment of *condemnation*.

As in, the one who believes and has eternal life, does not and will not experience condemnation, the guilty verdict before God.

As Paul says in Romans 8:1, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.

That is to say, for those who believe, they do not abide in a state of legal guilt before God. The wrath of God does not currently abide on them.

Any future evaluation or judgment for the believer, is not that of legal acquittal or legal condemnation.

No, they enter the courtroom having their verdict already determined based on whether or not they believed in the Son during their life.

And so, what Jesus is saying here in verse 24 is that the one who believes is not condemned. There is no condemnation presently or the threat of it in the future.

Notice the end of verse 24, **“but has passed out of death into life.”**

This is obviously not referring to physical death and physical life. Believers look just like unbelievers in this life.

Believers experience physical corruption and physical death just like unbelievers in this life. This is talking about spiritual death and spiritual life.

When we believe, we pass from a state or condition of spiritual death to a state or condition of spiritual life.

I really liked what one commentator said, death “lose its all-threatening, ultimately critical character for the future. It is no longer ahead of a person but behind them.”

And what happens legally to you in the courtroom of heaven, is manifested in one’s life here on earth.

In other words, those who are spiritually alive and those who are spiritually dead, will reveal their condition in how they live.

We saw this in a previous study back in chapter 3. It’s very similar language and speaking of the same realities.

3:18, **“He who believes in Him is not judged;”**

Presently. They don’t wait for the future to receive this verdict. The one believing is presently not in a state of legal guilt before God. [[Romans 8:1]]

Again, this doesn’t mean that believers are never guilty of any sin, or never experience guilt in the Christian life.

But rather that those who Christ Jesus at this point and forever more, have no guilty verdict, no *judicial* pronouncement of guilty upon them. Because they are forgiven and righteous *in Christ*.

But notice the second half of verse 18, **“he who does not believe has been judged already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.”**

Just like the believer doesn’t wait for their judicial sentence to be laid down in the future, the unbeliever as well already has a judicial sentence laid upon them.

But this is one of present *condemnation*. To presently be in a state of legal guilt before God in the divine courtroom.

And so this means that everyone needs to believe in Christ not merely to escape a future judgment, but to escape a current, existing condemnation.

The Lord isn't waiting upon death to weigh your good deeds and your bad deeds to determine where you will stand before Him and spend eternity.

No, your legal judgment is determined now. You are acquitted or condemned in this life. Our death is just the execution of that verdict.

Why do we receive our verdict in this life? Why isn't it upon death?

Verse 19 explains it: **“this is the judgment that that the Light has come into the world.”**

This is the reason for the judgment. Why the judgment of condemnation is just. Why it is that those who don't believe in Christ are appropriately condemned *now* in this life.

Because the light has come into the world. This is the incarnation of the Son. The personification of light. The light of truth, the light of holiness. The brightest and clearest light creation has ever had access to, in the person and work of Christ Jesus.

“and men loved the darkness rather than the Light,”

The problem isn't ignorance. It's not that man was merely in the dark and just needed some light to see.

It's that men *loved* the darkness *rather than, instead* of the light. They preferred it, those chose it above light.

They prefer to live in darkness of lies, falsehood as opposed to the light of truth. The darkness of ignorance as opposed to the light of wisdom and understanding.

The darkness of impurity and wickedness as opposed to the light of holiness. The darkness of death as opposed to the light of life.

The end of verse 19 explains the reason: **“for their deeds were evil.”**

Anyone who is rejecting Christ is not rejecting Christ because of their superior intellect, or wisdom, or their research, their evidence.

Rather, it is a love of sin, a love of darkness, and Christ threatens that. Anything that would require a change in that life, is naturally resisted and hated.

Verse 20, **“For everyone who does evil hates the Light,**

They're not neutral. They are not seeking to do good, seeking to do the right thing and just need a little more guidance. No, they *hate* the light.

“and does not come to the Light for fear that his deeds will be exposed.”

This word for “exposed” there, suggests not only exposure but the resulting shame and conviction.

The light amplifies their guilt, their conscious awareness of the evil within their hearts. And they spend their entire lives trying to convince themselves that the guilt they are experiencing isn’t real.

They try to spend their entire lives convincing themselves, I’m not that bad, I’m not evil, I’m certainly not as bad as most, I’m not guilty before God. There is no judgment in the future.

And so, unbelief in Christ is the manifestation, the proof that one is condemned before God, they are existing in a state of death, a state of condemnation.

But even though this is the natural state of everyone, there are some who do come to the light.

Verse 21, **“But he who practices the truth comes to the Light, so that his deeds may be manifested as having been wrought in God.”**

If someone is not condemned, if someone is justified before God, and thus practicing the truth, they will come to the light, they will come to Christ.

Why? They have no reason to hide. They don’t have any legal guilt before God. The light then is not a threat to them.

Notice the second half of verse 21, **“so that his deeds may be manifested as having been wrought in God.”**

This one doesn’t hide, he has no legal guilt before God. He doesn’t need to cover or conceal.

While many flee and hate the light, He comes to it, thus demonstrating God has done a supernatural work in his heart.

Back to our passage in 5:24. The realities that we just saw in greater detail in chapter 3, are now simply referred to as **passing from death to life**.

This is the first implication of Jesus’ equality with God – He sets the terms of eternal life.

Let’s move on now to the second implication of Jesus’ equality with God - the Son summons the dead unto life. Verses 25-29.

And there are a couple of different aspects of this. There is the summoning of the *spiritually dead unto spiritual life*, this is verse 25.

And then there is the summoning of all of the physically dead to life, a physical resurrection, both for believers and unbelievers. Verses 28-29.

But you'll notice the running theme between these verses is the powerful *voice of the Son of God* causing the dead, spiritually or physically, to rise.

It is his power, his authority, his prerogative.

Notice 5:25, **“Truly, truly, I say to you, an hour is coming and now is, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live.”**

Notice that phrase, **“an hour is coming and now is.”** That should sound familiar to you because we saw Jesus use the same formula speaking to the Samaritan woman about true worship back in 4:23.

23 But an hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for such people the Father seeks to be His worshipers.

So that phrase is used to refer to a period of time, an era coming, that is actually now being inaugurated.

And that's the idea back in 5:25. There is an era coming, that is actually beginning right now, Jesus says.

Now, notice three terms in particular in verse 25: the *dead*, will *hear*, and *live*.

Now look back at verse 24, as we're going to see these same three ideas: **“Truly, truly, I say to you, he who *hears* My word, and believes Him who sent Me, has eternal *life*, and does not come into judgment, but has passed out of *death* into *life*.”**

So, in both verse 24 and verse 25, you have the *dead hearing and living*. This is speaking of spiritual death and spiritual life.

A time is coming and now is, when the spiritually dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and they will be made alive.

This is the same reality Paul speaks of over in Ephesians 2:4, **“4 But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, 5 even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), 6 and raised us up with Him, (the spiritual resurrection, spiritual life) and seated us with Him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus,**

Back to John 5, it is important to see that in both of these passages, it is the language of dead and alive being used to describe our spiritual state.

And one thing that is very clear in both of those passages is that we don't come cause ourselves to come alive.

We should not think of God's work in salvation as the divine coast guard cruising around in the sea of lost humanity, as people struggle to stay afloat, they are in danger of drowning and dying, but whoever raises their hand up out of the water to be saved when they see the divine coast guard coming, God reaches down and pulls them up to safety.

That's not the picture, that's not the language the Scriptures use to describe conversion. Rather, than people alive and struggling to tread water in the sea, it is far more accurate to think of a spiritual cemetery.

Whereby God in Christ summons, calls forth dead sinners to rise up out of their graves and give them new life.

What happens to us spiritually in this life, is a preview of what happens to us physically in the resurrection.

In the future, Christ will raise our bodies from a lifeless state, from a state of death. Just as He will do in a few chapters here in John's gospel as he goes to the grave of Lazarus and commands the dead man to become alive.

Dead sinners come alive, not through religion, not through rituals or ceremonies, not by walking an aisle or praying a prayer, not through baptism, not through the Lord's Supper, but rather they come alive when Christ's Word penetrates their lifeless heart.

In verse 26, we're given the reason why/how the Son gives life.

²⁶ For just as the Father has life in Himself, even so He gave to the Son also to have life in Himself;

This is explaining how it is that the Son can generate resurrection life by his Word.

And again, it is *comparison of equivalency*. Just as the Father, even so, in the same way the Son.

And here it is in reference to God's aseity. We did talk about the aseity of God in chapter 1.

"Aseity" comes from a Latin word meaning "from himself." That is to say, God derives His existence from Himself and not from anyone or anything else.

It is a term to convey His independent self-existence. One who doesn't need anything because He has sufficient resources within himself for all that he is and does.

It's interesting looking back at 1:4, referring to the Son of God, "**4 In Him was life**, Existing in Him intrinsically, continuously, eternally, was life.

But back in 5:26, there is a potentially confusing phrase here because it appears to be saying that there was a point in time in which the Son did not have life within Himself and the Father had to give it to Him?

Notice verse 26, “**For just as the Father has life in Himself, even so He gave to the Son also to have life in Himself;**”

Is this saying that there was a point in which the Son did not have life within Himself? Does this challenge our view of the trinity?

To address this, let’s consider this question: Could the Son of God, who has eternally existed as God, be granted something in His incarnation that He has always possessed eternally?

The answer is of course yes. And I think that is the key to understanding statements like this, all throughout the gospels.

It is to recognize that often times these are statements relating to the incarnation and the Son of God’s taking on human flesh.

For example, eternally existing as God, the Son has always been omnipotent. Unlimited power and authority.

But when He took on human flesh and lived as a man, we see statements about the *Spirit of God* coming upon Him and enabling Him to do miraculous works.

We see statements like the great commission. All authority has been given to me.

Did the Son, existing as God, not have authority and power before the incarnation?

Not to mention all of the cases here in chapter 5 where the language of given or shows or entrusted is used of the Father in relation to the Son.

And so there is the tension we see in the person and work of Christ Jesus in the gospels. What has always been true of the Son of God, what He has always possessed eternally as the Son of God ...

In the incarnation, He takes on human flesh, He adds humanity to Himself, *in such a way* that as the God-man He now receives, is given the very things that He has always possessed eternally.

Applying this to verse 26, the Son, existing as God eternally, has life in Himself. 1:4, In him was (continuously existing) in Him was life.

When He took on human flesh in the incarnation, He was dependent on the Father to be granted that life in Himself.

In other words, the Father has granted Him to apply that aseity during his incarnation.

In verse 27, we see a very similar idea. The Son receiving something in the incarnation, that He has always possessed eternally.

Verse 27, **“and He gave Him authority to execute judgment, because He is *the* Son of Man.**

This provides the reasoning for the judgment being committed to the Son. “Son of man” is a phrase taken right out of Daniel 7.

Look back at 7:13, **“13 “I kept looking in the night visions, And behold, with the clouds of heaven One like a Son of Man was coming, And He came up to the Ancient of Days And was presented before Him. 14 “And to Him was given dominion, Glory and a kingdom, That all the peoples, nations and men of every language Might serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion Which will not pass away; And His kingdom is one Which will not be destroyed.”**

This individual is identified by the title “son of man.” And He is both a heavenly and earthly figure, both divine and human. And one who receives dominion and judgment and a kingdom.

As one author put it, “Jesus is the apocalyptic Son of Man who receives from the Ancient of Days the prerogatives of Deity, a kingdom that entails total dominion.”

Later on in the book of Daniel, 12:1, we read these words: **And there will be a time of distress such as never occurred since there was a nation until that time; and at that time your people, everyone who is found written in the book, will be rescued. 2 Many of those who sleep in the dust of the ground will awake, these to everlasting life, but the others to disgrace and everlasting contempt.**

Interestingly, this is the very direction Jesus now takes it in John 5:28. Right after the statement that authority has been given to Him to execute judgment because He is the Son of man:

“Do not marvel at this; for an hour is coming, in which all who are in the tombs will hear His voice, ²⁹ and will come forth; those who did the good *deeds* to a resurrection of life, those who committed the evil *deeds* to a resurrection of judgment.

The passage has now transitioned from spiritual death and spiritual judgment, verses 24-25, to now speaking of the future, physical implications of one’s spiritual state.

As one commentator put it, “The voice of the Son is powerful enough to generate spiritual life now; it will be powerful enough to call forth the physically dead then.”

All will be resurrected, and all will go to one of two resurrections.

Verses 28-29 are referring only to the future. How do we know that? Notice verse 28, **“an hour is coming.”**

He leaves out, **“and now is.”** So this is not something that is happening now. This is a future reality.

And it is a *physical* reality. Notice, **“all who are in the tombs.”** This is referring to physical death.

And, it is comprehensive, it’s universal. *All* who are in the tombs. All the physically dead will hear his voice.

Lifeless, physical matter. Dead bones, incinerated bones, mere human dust, will hear his voice. All bodies will be resurrected and reunited with the soul.

Verse 29, they **“will come forth;”** They will be raised to stand before the judge, the Son of God. Christ Jesus Himself.

“those who did the good *deeds* to a resurrection of life, those who committed the evil *deeds* to a resurrection of judgment.”

As we talked about earlier, everyone, both believer and unbeliever will stand before Christ Jesus. Everyone, both believer and unbeliever, will face an evaluation, an assessment based on their deeds, their works.

And right about now, you’re probably thinking: How is this consistent with the gospel of justification by faith alone in Christ alone?

This seems to be teaching salvation, eternal life is on the basis of good works.

Well, let’s give the apostle John, and Jesus for that matter, the benefit of the doubt and assume they remember what they’ve already said in this gospel?

We’re not going to look at the references, there would be far too many to consider. But just think back on how many times so far in this gospel, just the first 5 chapters, has John or Jesus quoting Jesus said, “if one believes they have eternal life?”

In fact, we don’t even have to go out of this context to see an example. It’s in this same sermon:

Verse 24, **“24 “Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears My word, and believes Him who sent Me, has eternal life, and does not come into judgment, but has passed out of death into life.**

Verse 25, **“Truly, truly, I say to you, an hour is coming and now is, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live.”**

Those who hear with the ears of their heart. Those who believe. Will live. Not to mention all the references of believing unto eternal life in the previous chapters.

So what is going on here in 5:29? Well, let me draw your attention to two phrases in verse 29: **those who did the good deeds and those who committed the evil deeds.**

We need to allow John in His gospel to define his terms.

And that language is very similar to what we saw earlier when we looked back at 3:20. In fact the same words are used:

20 For everyone who does evil hates the Light, and does not come to the Light for fear that his deeds will be exposed.

That is those who go to the resurrection of judgment.

Verse 21, **“But he who practices the truth (what is good) comes to the Light, so that his deeds may be manifested as having been wrought in God.”**

What is the ultimate difference between verse 20 and verse 21?

Those who do evil hate the light and won't come to the light. They hate Christ and everything He stands for. And their deeds reflect their spiritual condition.

Those who do good, practice the truth, come to the light. They love Christ and everything He stands for, and their deeds reflect their spiritual condition.

Their deeds can only be true as those that were carried out in God.

So in John's gospel and in Jesus's teaching, what is the most wicked thing you can do and what is the best thing you can do, the highest good?

The most wicked thing is to reject the light, to hate the light, to prefer darkness.
The highest good is to embrace the light.

Look also with me John 6:40, **“40 For this is the will of My Father, that everyone who beholds the Son and believes in Him will have eternal life, and I Myself will raise him up on the last day.”**

Here is a reference to the future, physical resurrection of the believer. And in this context there is no mention of the good deeds, but only the mention of believing in Him.

Why is that? Because that is the highest good, the chief example of a good work.

When a group of people approached Jesus earlier in John 6, and they were concerned about having enough good works, they were concerned about pleasing God, Jesus had an interesting response for them.

Look back at 6:28, **“Therefore they said to Him, “What shall we do, so that we may work the works of God?” 29 Jesus answered and said to them, “This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He has sent.”**

Notice, they speak of “works” plural. He condenses all “works” into one singular, chief work. Believing in the son whom the Father has sent.

And I think that is primarily what Jesus is saying back in 5:29. Already in this same sermon he has stated emphatically that the one who believes has eternal life.

He is not then contradicting Himself a few statements later by saying that you must have enough good works, you must obey the law in order to gain life.

Remember, He is speaking to his enemies, the Jewish leaders who are rejecting Him. And He is putting them on notice by saying:

I'm going to raise your body and you're going to stand before me, and if you refused my word and refused to believe, you will go away unto a resurrection of judgment.

We've seen two implications of Jesus' equality with God.

In verse 24, we will see that the Son sets the terms of eternal life
And in verses 25-29, we'll see that the Son summons the dead unto life

Giving them spiritual life in this age.
And determining their future destiny in the next age.