



LET'S BEGIN HERE

After Jesus healed the lame man at the pool of Bethesda, a storm of controversy arose over the Sabbath command. Who were the instigators of this tempest-in-a-teapot over tired tradition? The Pharisees! Those rascally religious leaders started harassing Jesus for breaking their interpretation of the Sabbath law. His response, in which He claimed equality with God the Father, incurred a whirlwind of religious wrath.

Remarkably, in the calm eye of this gathering storm of criticism and treachery, Jesus began a discourse that is still today life-changing in its implications. Jesus boldly offered a stirring defense of His own *deity* that continues to cause one either to hurl at Him arguments of disbelief and ridicule or to fall at His feet in humble praise!



YOUR TURN IN THE SCRIPTURES

It's very possible that you've read this passage from John chapter 5 many times. You've likely heard multiple sermons on these verses and perhaps even sat as a student and listened carefully to someone else's teaching. To overcome the pitfalls of overfamiliarity when searching the Scriptures, Chuck Swindoll suggests reading the Scripture passage as if for the very first time. That means you mentally set aside any preconceived notions and approach the passage with a new perspective.

Put on some fresh observation lenses as you read John 5:17–30 in preparation for this lesson. Then in a sentence or two, write down anything you had not noticed in the past.

Quotable

The words and claims of Jesus were never meant to be mere decorative sayings framed on the mantels of our homes but powerful truths that transform our lives.

— Charles R. Swindoll





Observation: Looking Closely at the Scene

John 5:17–30 is chock full of details about the setting, the context, and the message of this encounter between Jesus and the Pharisees. This passage is made up primarily of Jesus' own passionate speech in defense of His identity. Using your well-honed skills of observation, write down as many details as you see under each general category below.

The setting: Think about the *where* and *who* of the passage.

The context: Think about the *why* and *when* of the passage.

The message: Think about the *what* of the passage. (Identify the main details of what Jesus said in response to the Pharisees.)



Interpretation: Discovering the Life-Changing Meaning of Jesus' Claims

Whenever Jesus spoke He delivered eternal, powerful, living truth. How important then for us as Bible students to discover the meaning of His words! Not only will He provide deep theological insight into His own identity but, when embraced and believed, His expressions offer to our dry, sin-parched souls a much-needed balm for healing and transformation. Let's take a close look at six declarations Jesus made about Himself and try to determine what each one means.



Claim #1: *“I am equal with God the Father”* (John 5:18–20).

Read back through Jesus’ words in John 5:18–20. In what ways did Jesus claim equality with the Father?

How did Jesus describe His relationship to the Father? What aspect of that relationship did He emphasize in verse 20? Why is this significant?

Claim #2: *“I am the giver of life”* (5:21).

In this statement, Jesus claimed equal power with the Father. What did He use as an example of that power? Why would this have been significant at the time?

Why would claiming resurrection power be an essential aspect of Jesus’ identity?



Claim #3: *“I am the final judge over all humanity”* (John 5:22–23).

Jesus included a startling detail about the nature of final judgment. What did He claim?

How does this remarkable claim by Jesus provide further evidence of His deity?

What relationship did Jesus draw between honoring Himself and honoring His Father?

Claim #4: *“I hold the destinies of every human in My hand”* (5:24).

According to Jesus, what guarantees eternal life and an assurance of no condemnation for sin?



What dynamic did Jesus highlight regarding His relationship to God the Father?

How did this claim challenge the attitude of the Pharisees toward Jesus and the miracle He had just performed?

Claim #5: “I will raise the dead” (John 5:25–29).

Jesus revealed that the power of His voice could raise the dead; first, He must have been speaking about His literal voice (11:43–44), but He also spoke of a future resurrection when followers of Christ will be raised from physical and eternal death to eternal life because they believed His eternal Word.

Read carefully John 5:25–29 and as you do, circle or underline in your Bible each time Jesus mentions “resurrection” or “rise.”

What connection did Jesus make between the sound of His voice and resurrection?

How did Jesus relate His power to raise the dead to His relationship with God the Father (5:26)?



Claim #6: “*Everything I do is the will of God*” (John 5:30).

Just as a human shadow does not move on its own initiative, so Jesus cannot move out of step with His Father. How did Jesus describe this relationship to God the Father?

What connection did Jesus make between His authority to judge and His claim that He is always doing the Father’s will?



Correlation: How Does It Relate?

Jesus never intended His words about Himself or His deity to only remain cleverly displayed on coffee mugs and T-shirts. Rather, He desires that the truth of those claims bring us new life and make us into new creations (2 Corinthians 5:17).

Read each passage below, and in the space provided write a sentence or two about how each one supports the claims Jesus made about His deity in John 5.

John 11:23–25

Romans 1:16



1 Corinthians 15:22

Philippians 3:10

Colossians 1:15–20



Application: How Will You Respond?

Once confronted with the claims of Jesus, you have only one of two options in response: You embrace them by faith and receive eternal life, or you reject them outright and face certain judgment.

Here's how Chuck states it:

Stop for a few moments and seriously consider these six claims. Think of the best person in all of history (other than Jesus Christ), living or dead. Imagine him or her standing before you to make a speech having these six points:

- I am equal with God the Father.
- I am the giver of life.
- I am the final judge over all of humanity.
- I hold the destinies of every human in my hand.
- I will raise the dead.
- Everything I do is the will of God.



How would you respond?

Of all the great philosophers, teachers, artists, and statesmen who ever lived, none would dare make such claims unless he or she were either completely insane or shamelessly evil. Not unless He was indeed God in human flesh.¹



A FINAL PRAYER

Father, I thank You for sending Jesus, Your Son, to die on the cross for my sin. Please don't allow me to carelessly overlook these truths of His deity and oneness with You. Help me to know Him more and more and experience the power of His resurrection today. In His exalted name, I pray, amen.

ENDNOTE

1. Charles R. Swindoll, *Swindoll's Living Insights New Testament Commentary: Insights on John* (Carol Stream, Ill.: Tyndale House, 2014), 124.



BEHOLDING CHRIST . . . THE SON OF GOD

The Claims of the Christ

John 5:17–30

SEARCHING
THE
SCRIPTURES

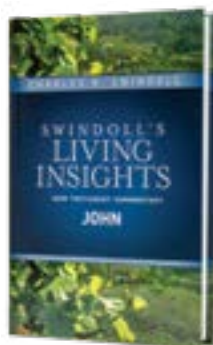
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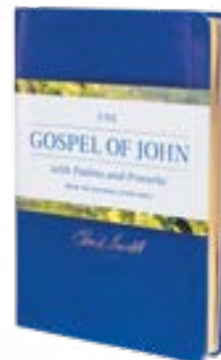
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For the 2018 broadcast, this *Searching the Scriptures* study was developed by Mark Tobey in collaboration with Bryce Klabunde, executive vice president of *Searching the Scriptures* Ministries, based upon the original outlines, charts, and sermon transcripts of Charles R. Swindoll's messages.



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