

# Further up, Further in

## Resources for Continued Study



LOOKOUT  
MOUNTAIN  
Presbyterian Church

### “JESUS’ DIVINE SONSHIP”

DATE: April 19, 2026

SPEAKER: Chad/Frank

SERIES: The Gospel of John

PASSAGE: John 5:18-29

## Family Dinner Table

### Lord, Liar, or Lunatic

One of the most famous passages in Christian apologetics, often referred to as the “Trilemma” was originally delivered by C.S. Lewis in a series of radio broadcasts on the BBC during World War II. Lewis responds to the common “historical Jesus” arguments of his time—the idea that one can admire Jesus’ ethics while ignoring his metaphysical claims. Lewis argues that because Jesus claims to be God, he cannot be just a good, moral teacher. He is either telling the truth, delusional, or evil:

“I am trying here to prevent anyone saying the really foolish thing that people often say about Him: ‘I’m ready to accept Jesus as a great moral teacher, but I don’t accept his claim to be God.’ That is the one thing we must not say. A man who was merely a man and said the sort of things Jesus said would not be a great moral teacher. He would either be a lunatic — on the level with the man who says he is a poached egg — or else he would be the Devil of Hell. You must make your choice. Either this man was, and is, the Son of God, or else a madman or something worse. You can shut him up for a fool, you can spit at him and kill him as a demon or you can fall at his feet and call him Lord and God, but let us not come with any patronizing nonsense about his being a great human teacher. He has not left that open to us. He did not intend to.”<sup>2</sup>

- In the *Divine Son Discourse* of John 5, Jesus claims the right to equal honor with the Father and the power to raise the dead. If we attempt to strip away Jesus’ divine authority to keep only his moral teachings, how do we explain eyewitness accounts like those found in Matthew 27:52-53, Mark 5:21-43, Luke 7:11-17, John 11:38-44, and 1 Corinthians 15:3-8?

For individual study or group discussion

By healing the lame man on the Sabbath, Jesus triggers intense opposition from the religious leaders. Christ uses his defense in John 5:17, “*My Father is working until now, and I am working*” as a springboard into what scholars call, the *Divine Son Discourse* (John 5:19-47). His primary intention is not to develop a theology of the Sabbath, but to explain what he meant by his response in verse 17. Jesus heals on the Sabbath to demonstrate the “*greater works*” the Father sent him to accomplish (v. 20). In John 5:18-29, Jesus asserts his **divine Sonship** through three radical claims of authority:

#### Declaring his equality with the Father (vv. 18-23)

In verse 19, Jesus begins by affirming perfect unity with God. The Son mirrors the actions of the Father so that he operates in a rhythmic “*likewise*” with everything his Father does. Jesus’ relationship is rooted in a deep, reciprocal love where the Father holds nothing back from the Son (v. 20). Crucially, Jesus claims that the honor due to the Father is equally due to him (v. 23). To withhold honor from the Son is to fail to honor God entirely, effectively shattering the religious leaders’ claim to piety while establishing his own divine Sonship.

- Verse 23 states that failing to honor the Son is failing to honor the Father. In our modern context, many people profess to “believe in God” or be “spiritual” while rejecting the deity of Jesus. Why is this logically and theologically impossible according to Jesus’ claims? (See sidebar: *Lord, Liar, or Lunatic.*)

#### Delivering spiritual resurrection (vv. 24-26)

Moving from his mutual majesty with the Father to his mission, Jesus explains that his work involves the impartation of life. He possesses “*life in himself*,” an attribute belonging solely to God, and has the authority to dispense it to whom he will. According to theologian Edward Klink, those who listen to and believe the words of Jesus can rest assured of their salvation, both now and at the final judgment: “*The present state of the ‘eternal life’ Jesus gives need not deny its future implications or reality, just as a future reality need not deny its present implications. As is common in the Gospel of John, Jesus can speak of the gift of life in the present without diminishing in any way the glorious aspects of life to come. The very fact that he will be life and judge in the future is proof that he is serving as life and judge in the now.*”<sup>1</sup> The believer has already “*passed from death to life*,” escaping the condemnation of judgment by trusting the Son’s life-giving Word.

- In verse 26, Jesus says the Son has “*life in himself*.” This is the doctrine of aseity—the idea that God is self-existent and depends on no one else for his being. Read Colossians 1:15-17. How does the Son’s role in sustaining the universe support the claim that he has “*life in himself*”? (cf. John 1:1-5)

#### Dispensing eternal judgment (vv. 27-29)

Finally, Jesus references the OT by identifying himself as the “*Son of Man*” who holds the authority to execute final judgment (Daniel 7:13-14). He instructs his listeners not to be amazed at his testimony that a physical resurrection is coming, where his voice will reach even the tombs. While his first coming brought the offer of spiritual life, his second coming will bring the finality of justice. This passage serves as a sobering reminder that every human soul will respond to the Son’s voice, either rising to the resurrection of life or facing the resurrection of judgment.

- Read Daniel 7:13-14. Jesus is identifying himself as the specific Figure to whom the Ancient of Days has delegated the cosmos. How does the “delegated” nature of the Son’s authority (the Father giving the Son the power to judge) reinforce their equality? (cf. Psalm 2)
- Read Acts 17:30-31. How does the fact of Jesus’ own resurrection serve as a “guarantee” of the coming day of judgment mentioned in v. 29?

### PRAY FOR HOME MISSIONS

CRU (Staff Support for Lauren Basey), supported ministry partner

### PRAY FOR WORLD MISSIONS

Daniel & April, world missions partners serving in a sensitive region

<sup>1</sup> Edward Klink III. *Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament*. 2016, Grand Rapids, MI. Zondervan. 288

<sup>2</sup> C.S. Lewis. *Mere Christianity*. Book 2, Chapter 3, (“The Shocking Alternative”). 1952, London. Geoffrey Bles Publisher. 52-53