

The Gospel of John

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Chapter Five

John 5:1

After these things there was a feast of the Jews, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem.

It seems that considerable time has elapsed since the healing of the son of the royal official at Capernaum. The particular feast is not identified but the middle chapters of John are chronologically related to various Jewish festivals: John 6:4 with the Passover, John 7:2 with Tabernacles, John 10:22 with Dedication, and John 11:55 with Passover. Some interpreters consider this feast associated with the season of Trumpets.

John 5:2

Now there is in Jerusalem by the sheep gate a pool, which is called in Hebrew Bethesda, having five porticoes.

Bethesda is located near the Sea of Galilee:



The sheep gate was probably an opening in the north wall of the city leading to the sheep market. Excavations have shown that there were actually two pools that were part of a reservoir system.



They were filled with water from the large reservoirs called Solomon's Pools southwest of Bethlehem. Fragments of stone piping have been found near Bethesda. There were four entrances around the pools and one in the center that was used by people seeking healing.

John 5:3-4

In these lay a multitude of those who were sick, blind, lame, and withered, [waiting for the moving of the waters; (4) for an angel of the Lord went down at certain seasons into the pool and stirred up the water; whoever then first, after the stirring up of the water, stepped in was made well from whatever disease with which he was afflicted.]

The bracketed portion above is not included in the oldest manuscripts and was probably added later to explain the agitation of the water that occasionally occurred. Verse seven is part of the original manuscripts and gives a reason why the stirring of the water was deemed critical for healing. Since the pools were part of the irrigation method there would be times when more water would flow into the pools leading to the noted stirring of water. The local people had probably established the ceremonies of healing associated with the times when the water was excessively stirred. There probably were occasions when some people had been cured when immersed in the swirling waters but Jesus will not be tempted to add to the superstitious events.

John 5:5-6

*A man was there who had been ill for thirty-eight years. (6) When Jesus saw him lying there, and knew that he had already been a long time in that condition, He *said to him, "Do you wish to get well?"*

John does not say that the man had ventured to the pool all during those 38 years but it only states that he had been ill for those years. Jesus saw the man lying near the pool and He knew that the man had been ill for a long time. There is an indication in verse 14 that his illness may have been a result of some sin in his life. Jesus went directly to the main point by asking the man if he wanted to get well. That may seem like a strange question but some people actually enjoy being ill so that others can take care of them and feel sorry for them. The longer someone has suffered from some illness it is not unusual for despondence to be a strong influence in their life and so Jesus asked the man if he indeed had a will to become well.

John 5:7

The sick man answered Him, "Sir, I have no man to put me into the pool when the water is stirred up, but while I am coming, another steps down before me."

The man did not directly answer the question of Jesus, which indicates that he may have fallen into a state of dependency. Many people on welfare for a long time actually are not inclined to want to become fully well so that they can work. He seems to have accepted the current acceptance of the healing qualities of the stirring water but was not able to get himself into the water before it stops swirling.

John 5:8-10

*Jesus *said to him, "Get up, pick up your pallet and walk." (9) Immediately the man became well, and picked up his pallet and began to walk. Now it was the Sabbath on that*

day. (10) So the Jews were saying to the man who was cured, "It is the Sabbath, and it is not permissible for you to carry your pallet."

As noted above, Jesus did not use the perhaps superstitious sensationalism of the stirring water for healing. He only told the man to get up, pick up his pallet, and walk. He then did what he had been unable to do. His pallet was made of straw that could be easily rolled up and carried on the shoulder. The Greek word for "walk" in both verses means to walk about. The sequence of events specified by John is important for first he had to be made well so that he could then pick up his pallet and walk around. The question of Jesus regarding his desire to become well was undoubtedly related to his being given faith from God so that he could become well. We often see accounts in Scripture concerning healings when the receiving of faith occurs before the healing. All that was needed was the command of Jesus to cause all three actions: healing, getting up, and walking. The legalistic Jews only responded to the fact that this action of carrying his pallet was against Sabbath rules. The Jews distinguished 39 actions that were not allowed on the Sabbath and number 39 was the carrying of one's pallet from location to location. The Synoptic Gospels record other occasions when the activity of Jesus on the Sabbath brought considerable criticism: Matt 12:1-14; Mark 2:23-3:6; Luke 6:1-11. Here they ignored the miracle and focused on the legality of the man carrying his pallet.

John 5:11-12

But he answered them, "He who made me well was the one who said to me, 'Pick up your pallet and walk.'" (12) They asked him, "Who is the man who said to you, 'Pick up your pallet and walk'?"

The man seems to have thought that anyone who could cure him of his illness had great powers and thus was worthy of obeying so he passed off the reason for his breaking the Sabbath law to the man who cured him. The Jews then wanted to know who was responsible for his picking up his pallet and walking. They did not address the healing aspect for they probably did not believe such had happened. They only wanted to know who gave him the orders to pick up his pallet and walk in disobedience to their Sabbath rules.

John 5:13

But the man who was healed did not know who it was, for Jesus had slipped away while there was a crowd in that place.

The man then probably looked around but did not see Jesus. The crowds would have made it easy for Jesus to walk away without anyone knowing who He was. It is interesting that there was not any commotion over the healing event. The man may not have even been a frequent visitor to the pool since nobody seems to have given his healing and resultant actions any notice.

John 5:14-15

*Afterward Jesus *found him in the temple and said to him, "Behold, you have become well; do not sin anymore, so that nothing worse happens to you." (15) The man went away, and told the Jews that it was Jesus who had made him well.*

Jesus later saw the man in the temple. We do not know why either of them were in the temple. We would like to think that the man was there to thank God for his healing but that is not revealed by John. Here we have the possibility that the illness of the man was caused by his sin. In the curing of the blind man Jesus rejects the concept of sin causing his blindness (John 9:2). However here Jesus tells the man to not sin anymore or something even worse could happen to him – perhaps eternal death. Somehow the man now knew the name of the man who made him well. Rather than addressing the violation of the Sabbath rule by picking up his pallet and carrying it away, he tells the Jews that Jesus had healed him. It seems to me that this response is a credit to the man rather than a way of passing the blame of breaking a Sabbath rule to someone else.

John 5:16

For this reason the Jews were persecuting Jesus, because He was doing these things on the Sabbath.

John does not tell us directly the reason for the Jews persecution of Jesus other than doing “work” on the Sabbath. However their hatred of Jesus would continue until His death some 18 months later. The Jews seemed to have a severe problem with authority over them. They thought that they were the “ruling elders” and anyone acting in a way that was contrary to their teachings was acting against their authority. Of course Jesus is the Ruling Elder and all are to be in obedience to Him. John records another healing taking place on the Sabbath with similar results and the synoptic Gospels also add other instances (Mark 2:23-28; 3-6; Luke 13:10-16; 14:1-6). Matthew also records events where Jesus spoke against the ruling of the Jews regarding violations of the Law. Matthew records these five events by recording first “you have heard” and following that statement with “but I say to you”. The words that the people heard were the interpretations of the Jews and Jesus corrects them with what He says:

Mat 5:21 “You have heard that the ancients were told, ' and 'Whoever commits murder shall be liable to the court.'

Mat 5:27 “You have heard that it was said, 'you shall not commit adultery';

Mat 5:33 “Again, you have heard that the ancients were told, 'you shall not make false vows, but shall fulfill your vows to the lord.'

Mat 5:38 “You have heard that it was said, 'an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth.'

Mat 5:43 “You have heard that it was said, 'you shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.'

This controversy will continue until His crucifixion. We must also follow the example of Jesus and check out whatever any person of authority states with the Word of God.

John 5:17

But He answered them, "My Father is working until now, and I Myself am working."

This is a very insightful comment that John could not have understood properly until after Pentecost when He was given the Spirit of God so that he could properly understand the actions and comments of Jesus. The Father did not cease His work on the Sabbath. Note from the definition of the original Sabbath that there is no end to it. In Gen 2:1-3 we do not see the standard endings of the other “days”: “there was evening and there was morning”. So this

Sabbath day has no ending as do the other days. God is still resting from creating but not from His work. Christians are also called to enter this Sabbath rest: “So there remains a Sabbath rest for the people of God. For the one who has entered His rest has himself also rested from his works, as God did from His.” (Heb 4:9-10) But the Bible is very clear that God still works with the souls of His children to keep His creation, including the church, functioning:

- Col 1:16-18 For by Him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities--all things have been created through Him and for Him. He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together. He is also head of the body, the church; and He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that He Himself will come to have first place in everything.
- Mat 5:45 so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven; for He causes His sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous.

The Sabbath rest for God is then a rest from any new creation. This rest will be interrupted with the new creation at the Parousia.

John 5:18

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.

The Jews hated Jesus for His flaunting His authority over them by doing on the Sabbath what they categorized as work. But they hated Him even more for calling God His own Father. In verse 17 Jesus said that He was the Son of the Father. John records in verses 19-24 some of the aspects of this sonship. John also records a quote of Jesus that offended the Jews even more directly: “I and the Father are one.” (John 10:30) The Jews would have referred to a statement from the OT that nobody is equal to God: “To whom then will you liken Me That I would be his equal?" says the Holy One.” (Isa 40:25)

God’s Sabbath Day rest has not yet ended. Note in Genesis that after discussions about every day except the Sabbath the day was said to be over with a statement like: “And there was evening and there was morning, a second day”. Although God certainly remains at work maintaining His creation (Col 1:17), He rested from creation (Heb 4:3-10) and such rest will continue until He creates the New Heavens and New Earth:

Rev 21:1-2 NASB Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth passed away, and there is no longer any sea. (2) And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, made ready as a bride adorned for her husband.

John 5:19

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.

Jesus then makes it clear that He is only doing what the Father has commanded Him to do. He is acting like an apprentice by doing exactly as the Master does. John records the words of Jesus in other verses as only doing the will of the Father (4:34; 5:30; 8:28; 12:50; 15:10). Therefore they

are to understand that whatever they observe Him doing is what the Father is doing and so they can learn about the Father from the Son. All the activities of Jesus were initiated by the Father and so they should have been eager to learn from the words and actions of Jesus as the Son.

John 5:20

"For the Father loves the Son, and shows Him all things that He Himself is doing; and the Father will show Him greater works than these, so that you will marvel.

This perfect love relationship between the Father and the Son is the reason for the actions and words of Jesus. Jesus sees all that the Father does and if the Father works on the Sabbath then He should also work on that day as well as any other day. The work of healing the cripple was a relatively minor work and Jesus informs them that the Father will show the Son even greater works and will cause even greater wonder from them if they will learn from such.

John 5:21

"For just as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, even so the Son also gives life to whom He wishes.

In the Jewish belief system God was the source of life and the only One capable of reversing the death process. The Sadducees did not believe in life after death but the Pharisees did and one of their great synagogue prayers called the "Eighteen Benedictions" addresses God as the "One who quickens the dead". Jesus does not just claim to be an instrument in God's hand for restoring the dead as were Elijah and Elisha, but as One who has been given this authority directly. He then claims that He can give life to whomever He wishes.

John 5:22-23

"For not even the Father judges anyone, but He has given all judgment to the Son, (23) so that all will honor the Son even as they honor the Father. He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent Him.

Now Jesus makes a claim that will cause the Jews to hate Him even more. To the Jews God has always been acknowledged as the Judge of all the earth: "Far be it from You to do such a thing, to slay the righteous with the wicked, so that the righteous and the wicked are treated alike. Far be it from You! Shall not the Judge of all the earth deal justly?" (Gen 18:25) They believed that God would ultimately exercise His work of judgment and raiser of the dead. Now Jesus couples His authority to raise the dead with also being the One who would exercise final judgment. Jesus states that the Father will not be the final Judge but has given Him all judgment authority. We will understand later how this is not contradictory to other statements about Jesus not judging (John 3:17). The Father and the Son are so intertwined as one that honoring the Son is also honoring the Father and anyone who dishonors the Son also dishonors the Father. Christ receives honor to the glory of God the Father (Phil 2:11). The honoring of Jesus as the Son does not diminish any glory of God the Father for their linking brings glory to both:

- Isa 45:23 NASB "I have sworn by Myself, The word has gone forth from My mouth in righteousness And will not turn back, That to Me every knee will bow, every tongue will swear allegiance.

- Phil 2:9-11 NASB For this reason also, God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, (10) so that at the name of Jesus EVERY KNEE WILL BOW, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth, (11) and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

The Jews thought that they could pay honor to the Father but dishonor Jesus but He told them that such was not possible.

John 5:24

"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.

The tense of the words "has passed out" means that such is an accomplished feat and a settled issue. This is what we call "realized eschatology". The believer does not need to wait for the last day to know that he has a favorable verdict from the Judge and they do not need to wait until the resurrection of their body to know that they have received it. Jesus has said that He is the One who gives life and now He states to whom He will give life. He gives life eternal to those who hear His word and believes the Father Who sent Him. This verse is truly a phenomenal blessing to those who know that they are included in this promise of everlasting life and no judgment. This verse is another statement of what John has previously revealed regarding judgment: "He who believes in Him is not judged; he who does not believe has been judged already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God." (John 3:18 NASB)

John 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.

The present meaning of this could mean the spiritual life that is available to those like the woman at the well, the power of Jesus to physically raise one from the dead like Lazarus, or it could refer to the events that will happen at the Second Coming of Jesus. The dead can only hear when the Spirit enters them and enables them to hear like the dead bones (Ezek 37:4) and like everyone chosen by God for life eternal with Him (Eph 1:3-6).

John 5:26

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

Only God inherently possesses life. He is the Creator of everything including all life. The Father shared this distinctive ability with His Son so that Jesus can also give life to whomever He chooses. John expressed this fact also in one of his letters:

1John 1:1-2 NASB What was from the beginning, what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we have looked at and touched with our hands, concerning the Word of Life-- and the life was manifested, and we have seen and testify and proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and was manifested to us--

John 5:27

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

The Father also gave Jesus the authority to execute judgment. John says that the reason is because Jesus is the Son of Man rather than the Son of God. The Jews were expecting this fulfillment of:

Dan 7:13-14 NASB "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. 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."

The Ancient of Days is God the Father and John is stating that this prophecy was fulfilled in Jesus. The Greek word for judgment is *krisis*, which has two meanings: discrimination and condemnation. Both meanings will be exercised when Jesus comes again. He will discriminate among those who believe in Him and those who do not. The former will receive eternal life and the latter will be self-condemned. This judgment is being temporally determined and will be fully executed at the Parousia.

John 5:28-29

"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.

Jesus is recorded as probably seeing a facial response of disbelief for He continued to tell of His God-nature that would have been blasphemous to them. But Jesus tells them that the time will come when all He has been telling them will be fulfilled. That the dead will hear His voice and be resurrected is a manifestation of His ability to give life. The twofold aspect of this resurrection is also told by John in chapter 6, verses 40 and 54. John will also illustrate this life-giving ability in John 11:24-26 concerning the resuscitation of Lazarus. Daniel also referred to this judgment: Dan 12:2 NASB "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." This final separation is decided in the temporal life of all people. The final resurrection of life will be for those who loved the light and the resurrection of judgment will be for those who hated the light (John 3:19-21). The former group have life already and the latter group are condemned already (John 3:18).

John 5:30

"I can do nothing on My own initiative. As I hear, I judge; and My judgment is just, because I do not seek My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me.

Jesus repeats His statements in verse 20 but here with special relation to His acts of judgment. He is only passing out the judgment that He has already heard from the Father. There is no doubt that this judgment is just for it originated with the Father Who sent Him. His lifelong food and drink is to do the Father's will (John 4:34; 6:38) so He safely leaves the vindication of this judgment in the Father's hand. Jesus now begins to speak with the confidence of being

commissioned by the Father and not with any arrogant self-assertion. John quotes Jesus 25 times as being sent by the Father using two different Greek words. One is *pempo* that means to send in a very general way. The other is *apostello* that also means to be equipped for service or delegated. Regarding the person of Jesus Christ both meanings are applicable. In John 20:21 both are used: *So Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you; as the Father has sent (apestralken) Me, I also send (pempo) you."* He is saying that in the same way that the Father commissioned me, so am I dispatching you on my errand.

John 5:31-32

"If I alone testify about Myself, My testimony is not true. There is another who testifies of Me, and I know that the testimony which He gives about Me is true.

A testimony of someone only given by him is of no value. Anyone can make even ridiculous statements about his ability or character. However Jesus states that another person also testifies of the aforementioned abilities of Jesus and, in context, that person must be the Father. Of course any testimony by God the Father must be true and such validates the testimony of Jesus, the Son of God. This bearing of witnesses is dominant in this Gospel as first introduced in *John 1:6-7 NASB There came a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came as a witness, to testify about the Light, so that all might believe through him.* This first witness is John the Baptist. The people could still think that Jesus was not stating truths except for the signs that He was doing that could not be done by anyone but the person about whom Jesus is giving these abilities of life-giving and judgment.

John 5:33-35

"You have sent to John, and he has testified to the truth. (34) "But the testimony which I receive is not from man, but I say these things so that you may be saved. He was the lamp that was burning and was shining and you were willing to rejoice for a while in his light.

John is here writing of the reply of John B. regarding his identity (John 1:19-28). John B. told the religious leaders of the One whose coming he was preparing. John B. then later testified that Jesus was the Son of God (John 1:29-34). Jesus replied that what John B. stated was indeed true but He then continued by stating that His testimony is not from any man. The evangelist then quotes Jesus as saying that John B. was not the light (*phos*) but he was a light bearer or a lamp (*lchnos*). The lamp burning was to show the light but it is not the light. Those who heard John B. were rejoicing at the news of the coming of this promised One but now the lamp had been removed. Now the light itself was present with even greater testimony than that of John B.

John 5:36

"But the testimony which I have is greater than the testimony of John; for the works which the Father has given Me to accomplish--the very works that I do--testify about Me, that the Father has sent Me.

The testimony of Jesus is greater than that of John B. because Jesus is doing the works assigned Him by the Father. It is those works that testify of Him and the fact that the Father sent Him. The Greek word John uses for works is *erga* and those works testify of the divine nature of Jesus. John will later quote Jesus as saying: *John 10:25 NASB Jesus answered them, "I told you, and*

you do not believe; the works that I do in My Father's name, these testify of Me. Jesus never performed miracles to draw attention to Himself but He did them to prove His divinity. These were “signs” (*semeia*) but only those who have ears to hear and eyes to see can believe: Matt 11:15 NASB "He who has ears to hear, let him hear. Remember that the signs were miracles that pointed to a reality beyond that of human experience. Most of them were followed by confessions of belief by those witnesses. This Gospel has seven of these works:

- The turning of water into wine (2:1-11)
- The healing of the official's son (4:43-54)
- The healing of a paralytic (5:1-15)
- The feeding of the multitude (6:1-14)
- The walking on the water (6:16-21)
- The cure of the blind man (9:1-41)
- The raising of Lazarus (11:1-41)

John 5:37-38

"And the Father who sent Me, He has testified of Me. You have neither heard His voice at any time nor seen His form. (38) "You do not have His word abiding in you, for you do not believe Him whom He sent.

This seems like a cyclical argument in that they do not hear the affirmation of the Father concerning Jesus because they do not believe Him the Father sent. However we know that people need to receive faith from God, which is the abiding power that allows them to believe, trust, and obey Jesus. There were occasions when a voice was spoken about Him but they are mainly recorded by the Synoptic Gospels (Matt 3:17; Mark 1:11; Luke 3:22; Matt 17:5; Mark 9:7; Luke 9:35) and John 12:28 NASB "Father, glorify Your name. Then a voice came out of heaven: I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again." John does not record the voice from heaven at the baptism of Jesus but only to the dove descending upon Him (John 1:32-34). Probably those reading this Gospel would have been familiar with the event to know more details as recorded in Matt 3:17. But those present during this discourse did not recognize the affirmation of Jesus by the Father.

John 5:39-40

"You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; it is these that testify about Me; (40) and you are unwilling to come to Me so that you may have life.

The Pharisees would have diligently searched the Scriptures but they were spiritually blind and thus unable to follow them to the ultimate conclusion that indeed Jesus was the One prophesied as the promised Messiah. Jesus has already stated that He has the ability to give life just as does the Father but they are not willing to come to Him so that they might become born again (John 3:3-7). The validity of the speaking of the OT to the person of Jesus as the Messiah is the reason that Christian scholars kept the OT as an important component of the Bible. Jesus is recorded as affirming this verification: Luke 24:44 NASB Now He said to them, "These are My words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things which are written about Me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled."

John 5:41-42

"I do not receive glory from men; (42) but I know you, that you do not have the love of God in yourselves.

Jesus did not seek the glory from men but only from the Father. Those who preach false doctrines such as prosperity theology do receive much glory from men but it is useless for such messages are not from God and so are really idolatrous sayings as prophesied by Paul: *2Tim 4:3-4 NASB For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but wanting to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires, and will turn away their ears from the truth and will turn aside to myths.* Jesus also has been previously quoted as saying that He knows men (John 2:24-25) and thus really understands their thinking about spiritual matters. The Greek word for "know" is *egnoka* that means an intimate and settled understanding of their thoughts and words. People often will make confessions of believing Jesus during an emotional crusade but that knowledge does not last as no fruit comes from it (Matt 13:19-23). It is very sad for people to be self-deceived so the Bible must be taught properly so that people can recognize false beliefs.

John 5:43-44

"I have come in My Father's name, and you do not receive Me; if another comes in his own name, you will receive him. (44) "How can you believe, when you receive glory from one another and you do not seek the glory that is from the one and only God?"

People are no different today than in the time of Jesus. They are quick to accept someone who is very charismatic and makes great promises but who have nothing but the outer shell. They are like a movie front without any interior. The people receive glory from one another much like politicians and false preachers today who make promises that are not backed by proper exegesis but only appear true because of their eisegesis. There is much seeking of glory from each other among some theologians and preachers. But acceptance of the truth of Jesus may result in condemnation among peers especially in times where concepts of the virgin birth and physical resurrection are not politically correct. There have been many people claiming to be Christ over the years. A famous example is Simeon ben Kosebah who claimed to be the Messiah of David's line and led a revolt against Rome in AD 132. Also consider the choice of Barabbas over Jesus at the final trial (Luke 23:18-23). Matthew wrote of many false christs that would appear: Matt 24:24 NASB "For false Christs and false prophets will arise and will show great signs and wonders, so as to mislead, if possible, even the elect."

John 5:45-47

"Do not think that I will accuse you before the Father; the one who accuses you is Moses, in whom you have set your hope. (46) "For if you believed Moses, you would believe Me, for he wrote about Me. (47) "But if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe My words?"

If Jesus were their accuser they would all be judged harshly. But Jesus turned over the accusations to Moses and that would have been especially sensitive to them for they continually and with much diligence searched the writings of Moses trying to find their salvation. Paul also

referred accusations to Moses: “All who have sinned under the law will be judged by the law” (Rom 2:12). He further condemned their research for their studies did not reveal the correct information. Moses wrote of Jesus and they should have understood that. One verse that we may think of that Jesus could have been referring is: “The LORD your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your countrymen, you shall listen to him.” (Deut 18:15 NASB) Their repudiation of Jesus showed that they reputed Moses and he would so judge them. Jesus did not come to annul the law and prophets but to fulfill them: “Do not think that I came to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I did not come to abolish but to fulfill. For truly I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or stroke shall pass from the Law until all is accomplished.” (Mat 5:17-18 NASB)

Jesus is telling them that a thorough understanding of the predictions of the Law through Moses would lead them to a belief in Him. Luke records an interaction between a rich man and Abraham when the rich man had been condemned to Hades. The rich man interacted with Abraham asking him to send someone to talk to his brothers so they would not suffer the same fate he had. Abraham told the man essentially the same thing Jesus told the Jews: Luke 16:29-31 NASB "But Abraham *said, 'They have Moses and the Prophets; let them hear them.' But he said, 'No, father Abraham, but if someone goes to them from the dead, they will repent!' But he said to him, 'If they do not listen to Moses and the Prophets, they will not be persuaded even if someone rises from the dead.'"

Of course Jesus knew that even after His resurrection most of them would still not believe. This interaction between Jesus and the religious establishment would continue as He stated that He was the Son of God and they only saw His statements as interfering with their control of religion by their interpretations. This interaction would continue until it reaches a climax: The Jews answered him (Pilot), "We have a law, and by that law He ought to die because He made Himself out to be the Son of God." (John 19:7 NASB)