

# CHURCH.

# LESSON 14

<b>1</b>	PRAYER
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**Group leader. Pray** for God's guidance through his Spirit, for awareness of his presence and for listening to his voice. Commit your group and this lesson about church building to the Lord.

<b>2</b>	SHARING (20 minutes) <span style="float: right;"><i>[QUIET TIMES]</i> GALATIANS 1 - 4</span>
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**Take turns** and **share** (or **read** from your notes) in short what you have learned from one of your quiet times out of the assigned Bible passages (Galatians 1 – 4).

Listen to the person sharing, take him serious and accept him. Do not discuss what he shares. Take notes.

<b>3</b>	MEMORISATION (5 minutes) <span style="float: right;"><i>[PREPARATION FOR CHRISTIAN MARRIAGE]</i> (2) AMOS 3:3</span>
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**Review** two by two.

(2) Same life-goals: Amos 3:3. Do two walk together unless they have agreed to do so?

<b>4</b>	BIBLE STUDY (85 minutes) <span style="float: right;"><i>[THE GOSPEL OF JOHN]</i> JOHN 5:1-47</span>
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**Introduce.** Make use of the five steps method of Bible study to study John 5:1-47 together. John 5:1-16 describes the Word, Jesus Christ, rejected by the Jews in Judea after the miracle at Bethesda. John 5:17-30 contains the claims of Jesus Christ with respect to God the Father. John 5:31-47 speaks about the witnesses of Jesus Christ.

<b>STEP 1. READ.</b>	<b>GOD'S WORD</b>
<b>Read.</b> LET US READ John 5:1-47 together. Let us take turns to read one verse each until we have completed the reading.	

<b>STEP 2. DISCOVER.</b>	<b>OBSERVATIONS</b>
<b>Consider.</b> WHICH TRUTH IN THIS PASSAGE IS IMPORTANT FOR YOU? Or WHICH TRUTH IN THIS PASSAGE TOUCHES YOUR MIND OR HEART? <b>Record.</b> Discover one or two truths that you understand. Think about them and write your thoughts in your notebook. <b>Share.</b> (After the group members have had about two minutes to think and write, take turns to share). Let us take turns to share with one another what each of us has discovered. (Remember: In every small group, the group members will share different things)	

5:17-23

**Discovery 1. The claims of Jesus Christ.**

Jesus Christ made certain claims about himself that were well understood by the Jews.

(1) In John 5:17-18, Jesus claimed that he was *equal in essence* with God the Father.

Jesus called God *his Father*. The Jews immediately understood that Jesus claimed for himself *deity in the highest sense of that term*. They understood that Jesus claimed that he was equal with God the Father. The claim of Jesus was either the most wicked blasphemy, which should be punished with death, or it is the most glorious truth, which should be accepted by faith! God the Father and God the Son have *the same divine nature*. Thus Jesus claimed that he is equal in essence with God the Father. This was the real reason why the Jews wanted to kill Jesus.

The Jews were also attacking Jesus for allegedly violating the Sabbath. The Jews regarded the essence of the Sabbath as idleness and maintained that all work on that day was wrong. But Jesus said that if that was true, then the Jews also accused God the Father of violating the Sabbath, because God the Father is always at his work of preserving the creation and of saving his people! God the Father never stops and rests in the sense of "idleness". He continues to preserve the created universe and to save people from sin. Likewise, the Son, who stands in the closest possible relation to the Father, is doing the same. In verse 17, Jesus says, "My Father is always at his work to this very day, and I too, am working". The meaning of Jesus' words is that when the Jews attack the Son for violating the Sabbath, then they are

also attacking God the Father himself for violating the Sabbath, because God the Son is equal in essence with God the Father.

(2) In John 5:19-22 Jesus claimed that he was *equal in works* with God the Father.

He says, “The Son can do nothing by himself. He can do only what he sees his Father doing, because whatever the Father does the Son also does”. *The action that originates with the Father is manifested visibly in the Son.* The Son sees what the Father shows him, and then he reveals the Father’s mind by his audible words and visible actions. The Son perceives the will of the Father and then puts it into effect.

Jesus assures the Jews that he has the authority to perform much greater works than healing the paralysed man (on a Sabbath). If what he has done already has taken them by surprise, what they have yet to see will give them real cause for wonder. Especially two activities are emphasised: to give life to the spiritual and physical dead people, and to execute judgement. Jesus claims, “Just as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, even so the Son gives life to whom he is pleased to give it.” Jesus does not claim simply to be the instrument in God’s hand for restoring the dead to life, like the prophets Elijah and Elisha were. He claims that he has authority to raise the dead, not merely to resume their mortal life on earth, but to raise people to the life of the age to come! He claims to have the same authority as the Father has to impart eternal spiritual life to spiritually dead people now and to impart immortal physical life to the physical dead people at the resurrection in the future.

Jesus also claims, “The Father judges no one, but has entrusted all judgement to the Son”. Throughout the Old Testament God has been acknowledged as “the Judge of all the earth” (Genesis 18:25). His judgements were constantly being exercised in the lives of individuals and nations. At the end of times there will be a final judgement. Jesus also claims the authority to execute the final judgement. As a matter of fact, he claims that God the Father has given the whole final judgement to God the Son, so that God the Son may receive the same honour as is given to God the Father!

(3) In John 5:23 Jesus claimed that he was *equal in honour* with God the Father.

He says, “That all may honour the Son just as they honour the Father. He who does not honour the Son does not honour the Father, who sent him”. In Philippians 2:9-11, as a reward for his obedience unto death, God the Father has given Jesus a name above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord (Greek: kurios). In Isaiah 45:22 this same honour belongs only to the LORD (Hebrew: JaHWeH, Greek: kurios). Therefore, when Jesus Christ receives this honour, the glory of God is not diminished or given to *another*. The glory of God is rather enhanced, because Jesus Christ receives these honours “to the glory of God the Father” (Philippians 2:11).

Whenever the Son is exalted, the Father is glorified. Whenever people bow their knees before Jesus Christ and confess with their mouths that Jesus Christ is their Saviour and Lord, God the Father is glorified!

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5:30-47

### Discovery 2. The witnesses about Jesus Christ.

In verse 31, Jesus says that his own testimony concerning himself is completely true but that it is not valid in the estimation of the Jews. Of course, on earth a testimony to oneself is not valid. No one can validate his own signature. If the claims of Jesus were made without the authority of the Father, then nobody would be obligated to accept his claims. However, the testimony of Jesus is true, because his testimony was confirmed (validated) by the testimony of God the Father (John 8:13-18). Nevertheless, the Jews continue to deny the trustworthiness of the testimony (claims) of Jesus Christ, because they regard it as invalid. Therefore, Jesus calls attention to five other very important witnesses on his behalf! The Jews cannot disregard these witnesses.

(1) The witness of God the Father himself.

In John 5:19, 30, Jesus introduces God the Father as his witness. He says that the Son does nothing on his own initiative. He follows the example of the Father. For all eternity, the relationship between God the Father and God the Son has been characterised by the Son doing the will of the Father, speaking what the Father speaks, judging like the Father judges and pleasing the Father in everything. On the basis of this unchanging principle of action between God the Father and God the Son, Jesus can safely leave his vindication in the God’s hands. And God the Father does indeed vindicate the Son and provides credentials for him.

In verse 32, Jesus introduces “another witness”. From verses 36-37 we know that this witness is God the Father. God the Father bears witness to Jesus Christ in three ways:

- in the Old Testament Scriptures
- in speaking directly from heaven at his incarnation
- and by the works God the Father has given God the Son to fulfil.

All the following witnesses are subordinate to the testimony of God the Father.

(2) The witness of John the Baptist.

In John 5:33-35, Jesus introduces John the Baptist as his witness. The calling and task of John the Baptist was to testify as a witness concerning the light (John 1:7). To the delegation of Jews who came from Jerusalem, he testified that Jesus was “the true light that gives light to every man”, that he was “the coming Lord, whose way he prepared” (Isaiah 40:3; Mark 1:3), that he was “the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world”, that he “baptises with the Holy Spirit”, and that he is “the Son of God” (John 1:7,9,23,29,33,34)! John was not the light, but the light-bearer or lamp, who attracted the crowds to Jesus Christ. John fulfilled his task well. Now the Light himself was here with even greater accreditation (weightier testimony) than even the testimony of John the Baptist could supply.

(3) The witness of the works of Jesus.

In John 5:36, Jesus introduces the very work, which God the Father had given to God the Son as a witness. The work which God the Father gave Jesus Christ to do was:

- through his incarnation make the invisible God known
- through his death and resurrection make atonement for sins<sup>1</sup> and thus reconcile<sup>2</sup> people to God
- through his ascension and enthronement establish the kingdom of God.

All the other individual works of Jesus, like his preaching, teaching, healing, deliverances, etc. contribute to these. His miracles were signs that pointed to the reality of God and his work of salvation. All these miracles were a visible proof that God the Father had sent Jesus Christ and had approved his work.

(4) The witness of the Scriptures.

In John 5:39-40, Jesus introduces the Old Testament Scriptures as his witness. Jesus says that although the Jews possessed the Old Testament Scriptures, they did not have the Word of God in their hearts. Although they possessed the Old Testament, they did not believe or obey its words. Although the Old Testament speaks very much about the coming Messiah, Jesus Christ, the Jews did not recognize or acknowledge Jesus Christ as the Messiah and did not come to him to receive eternal life.

In Luke 24:27 and 44, Jesus explained to his disciples what was said in all the Old Testament Scriptures concerning himself. And 2 Timothy 3:15 teaches that the holy Scriptures are able to make a person wise with regard to salvation and that this salvation only comes through faith in Christ Jesus! Many times the Jewish teachers have written in their books that the study of the Scriptures is the way to the life of the coming age. The New Testament in Romans 10:4 confirms that this life is found in Jesus Christ who is “the end of the law”, so that everyone who has faith may be justified.

(5) The witness of Moses.

In John 5:45-47, Jesus introduces Moses as his witness. The Jews regarded Moses as their highest prophet. However, Jesus points out that the Jews did not believe what Moses wrote. In Deuteronomy 18:15, Moses prophesied, “The Lord your God will raise up for you a Prophet like me from among your own brothers. You must listen to him” (cf. Acts 3:22-23). Moses himself prophesied that God commanded all people to obey the coming Messiah. However, the hostile Jews did not see in Jesus the coming Messiah, the voice of God and the form of God. In their hardness of heart, they rejected Jesus the Messiah, the Son of God.

**STEP 3. QUESTION.**

**EXPLANATIONS**

**Consider.** WHICH QUESTION ABOUT ANYTHING IN THIS PASSAGE WOULD YOU LIKE TO ASK TO THIS GROUP?

Let us try to understand all the truths in John 5:1-47 and ask questions about the things we still do not understand.

**Record.** Formulate your question as clearly as possible. Then write your question in your notebook.

**Share.** (After the group members have had about two minutes to think and write, let each person first share his question.)

**Discuss.** (Then, choose a few of these questions and try to answer them by discussing them together in your group.)

(The following are examples of questions the students might ask and some notes about the discussion of the questions.)

5:8

Question 1. Why was the paralysed man immediately healed?

**Notes.**

A paralysed man cannot move himself, cannot stand up or pick up something or walk. This paralysed man complained that there was no one to help him when the water started moving. Then Jesus said to this paralysed man, “Get up! Pick up your mat and walk!” This was a great challenge to a man who had just confessed his own complete inability!

<sup>1</sup> Atone. The sacrifice of atonement turns God’s righteous indignation against sins away and removes the sin that stands in between God and man. The sacrifice of atonement removes the problem (sin)

<sup>2</sup> Reconcile. The sacrifice of atonement then brings the two separated parties together again. The sacrifice of atonement removes the consequences of the problem (the separation between God and man) (Isaiah 59:1-2).

However, Jesus never commands anything that would be impossible to do. When Jesus speaks, it means that he wants this to happen. His spoken word is powerful and effective (cf. Matthew 4:4). Here, Jesus wants this paralysed man to walk again. The paralysed man believed the word of Jesus. To show that he believed, he obeyed (cf. Hebrews 11:6-8). The paralysed man was immediately cured, picked up his mat and walked! The paralysed man was immediately healed, because Jesus Christ spoke his powerful and effective word, and because the paralysed man believed his word (the second is dependent on the first)! The recovery of the man was not gradual or partial, but instant and complete! Again the glory of Jesus is revealed.

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5:24-25

Question 2. How does the Son give life to the dead?

**Notes.**

(1) The word of Jesus enables a person to believe and gives life.

In John 5:24, Jesus Christ, the Son of God says, “I tell you the truth, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life, and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life”. Jesus Christ gives life to people by his word. “His word” is his whole message to the world. And he speaks his word by his Father’s authority. The incident of the healing of the paralysed man is “a sign” of how Jesus gives spiritual life to people by his word. The paralysed man received physical healing through the word of Jesus Christ that enabled him to believe and gave him power to stand up. Likewise, people will receive spiritual healing only through the word of Jesus Christ that gives life.

(2) The word of Jesus causes the Holy Spirit to work.

In John 5:25, Jesus says, “I tell you the truth, a time is coming and has now come when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God and those who hear will live.” How can “the dead” be expected to hear? In Ezekiel 37:4, the prophet says, “Dry bones, hear the word of the Lord!” And the breath of God came from the four winds into them and entered the dead bodies and they were able to respond to the call to stand up! There in John the same Spirit of God enable the spiritually dead people to hear the voice of Jesus Christ and enter into eternal life!

(3) The word of Jesus comes only to those whom he chooses in a sovereign way.

Which spiritually dead people will hear his voice and live? In John 5:21, Christ says that he gives life *to whoever he is pleased to give it*. Jesus Christ gives eternal life to those he chooses in a sovereign way to give it. The Holy Spirit will cause them to hear his voice and will regenerate them.

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5:26

Question 3. What does it mean that the Son has life in himself?

**Notes.**

None but God the Father possesses inherently this *life-in-himself*, because only he is unbegotten and uncreated. He is in his very being the living God and completely self-sufficient. Now Jesus says, “As the Father has life in himself, so he has granted the Son to have life in himself”. From all eternity God the Father has imparted his prerogative to have *life-in-himself* to God the Son. This is the meaning of the words: “only-begotten Son”. Jesus Christ is begotten, but not created. The term ‘only begotten Son’ does not refer to anything akin to the human world. It does not refer to any beginning somewhere in the past. It is a term that describes Christ’s Trinitarian Sonship.

John 3:16 proves that Christ was the only begotten Son of the Father *before his incarnation*. God the Father’s bestowal of *life-in-himself* to God the Son did not happen at the incarnation or at the baptism of Jesus. This is an eternal act and a part of the unique Father-Son relationship that already existed in the beginning. *In the eternal order*, God the Father imparted this *life-in-himself* to the Son, and *in the temporal order*, the Son reveals this life to people on earth. In 1 John 1:2, God the Son is depicted as the embodiment of that eternal life which “was with the Father and was made manifest to us”. Human beings and all other created beings do not possess this *life-in-themselves*, because they are created. Their life is derived from their Creator, God.

**STEP 4. APPLY.**

**APPLICATIONS**

**Consider.** WHICH TRUTHS IN THIS PASSAGE ARE POSSIBLE APPLICATIONS FOR CHRISTIANS?

**Share and record.** Let us brainstorm with one another and record a list of possible applications from John 5:1-47.

**Consider.** WHICH POSSIBLE APPLICATION DOES GOD WANT YOU TO TURN INTO A PERSONAL APPLICATION?

**Record.** Write this personal application down in your notebook. Feel free to share your personal application.

(Remember that people in every group will apply different truths or even make different applications of the same truth. The following is a list of possible applications.)

## 1. Examples of possible applications from John chapter 5.

- 5:1-7. "Bethesda" (Aramaic: bet hisdah) means "house of mercy", but the elbowing and shoving of the sick people at the water made it into a place of mercilessness. Don't allow your home or congregation to become a home of mercilessness.
- 5:8-10. The governor Nehemiah tried to stop merchants from entering Jerusalem on the Sabbath to sell their goods (Nehemiah 13:15-22). However, the Jewish teachers of the law changed the fourth commandment about keeping the Sabbath "holy" (separate) into many human laws like not carrying anything on the Sabbath. Beware of the warning of Jesus to "nullify the word of God for the sake of your tradition", because such "worship is in vain" and such "teachings are but rules taught by men" (Matthew 15:1-9).
- 5:23. Honour God the Son as you honour God the Father. The religions that do not honour Jesus Christ, also do not honour God!  
He, who honours Christ, honours God (John 5:23).  
He, who knows Christ, knows God (John 8:19).  
He, who believes in Christ, believes in God (John 12:44).  
He, who accepts Christ, accepts God (John 13:20).  
He, who receives Christ, receives God (Matthew 10:40).  
He, who rejects Christ, rejects God (Luke 10:16).  
He, who rejects Christ, does not come to God the Father (John 14:6).  
He, who has seen Christ, has seen God the Father (John 14:9-10).  
He, who obeys the words of Christ, loves God (John 14:21,23).  
Everyone whom God the Father gives to Jesus Christ, will come to Jesus Christ and will never be driven away (John 6:37,44; cf. 17:2,6,9).  
He who acknowledges Christ, acknowledges God (1 John 2:23).
- 5:24. Proclaim the gospel! Whoever hears the gospel and believes, immediately receives eternal life, will never be condemned in the final judgement day and has already crossed over from the state of death to the state of life.
- 5:28-29. Be prepared for the second coming of Christ. Then all the living and the dead people will hear his voice and come out of their graves in order to receive their eternal punishment or their eternal salvation.
- 5:31-47. Make sure that you believe and have received the testimony of God the Father concerning Jesus Christ.
- 5:39. Study the Bible, because it testifies about Jesus Christ! And it makes you wise to receive salvation (2 Timothy 3:15).
- 5:44. What is more important for you: to receive the praise of your family, friends and countrymen or to receive the praise of the only God?

## 2. Examples of personal applications from John chapter 5.

I want to practise to have faith in the words of Jesus. When Jesus said to the paralysed man, "Get up! Pick up your mat and walk!" it might seem to people to be something impossible to do, but it was not something impossible for Jesus to do. When Jesus teaches me in the Bible, then it means that he wants these things to happen in my life. His spoken word is powerful and effective. He can do what he says and he wants to do what he says. Therefore, I want to practise to have faith in what he says. Like the paralysed man, I will confess my complete inability. But like the paralysed man, I too will obey what Jesus says.

I want to emphasise in my confession of Jesus Christ that he is equal with God the Father. No one can define the nature of God. In order to do that, he must be greater than God. While the mind of God is comparatively speaking as great as the Pacific Ocean, the human mind is only as big as a cup of water. Although I cannot fully understand the divine nature of God, I will confess him *as he has revealed himself* in the Bible. First, in Matthew 28:19, Jesus says that Christians are baptised "in the one name" of God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. God has *one name* and one Divine Being who has revealed himself within human history with three inner distinctions within his Divine Nature. Jesus Christ is the second inner distinction within the Divine nature. In John 5:26, says that God the Father had granted him to have *life-in-himself*. This means that from all eternity, God the Father and God the Son have the same divine nature.

### STEP 5. PRAY.

### RESPONSE

LET US TAKE TURNS TO PRAY ABOUT ONE TRUTH THAT GOD HAS TAUGHT US in John 5:1-47. (Respond in your prayer to what you have learned during this Bible study. Practise to pray only in one or two sentences. Remember that people in every group will pray about different issues.)

<b>5</b>	PRAYER (8 minutes)	<i>[INTERCESSION]</i> PRAY FOR OTHERS
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*Continue to pray* in groups of two's or three's. Pray with one another for one another and for the people in the world (Romans 15:30; Colossians 4:12).

<b>6</b>	PREPARATION (2 minutes)	<i>[ASSIGNMENT]</i> FOR NEXT LESSON
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*(Group leader.* Give the group members this preparation for at home in writing or let them copy it down).

1. Commitment. Be committed to make disciples and build Christ's Church.
2. Preach, teach or study the Bible study of John 5 together with another person or group of people.
3. Personal time with God. Have a quiet time from half a chapter of Galatians 5 - 6 and Ephesians 1 each day. Make use of the favourite truth method. Make notes.
4. Memorisation. Meditate and memorise the new Bible verse. (3) Self-control: 1 Thessalonians 4:3-5. Daily review the last 5 memorised Bible verses.
5. Prayer. Pray for someone or something specific this week and see what God is doing (Psalm 5:3).
6. Update your notebook on building Christ's Church. Include your notes on personal time with God, your memorisation notes, your Bible study notes and this preparation.