

John 5:17-30. Christ's Defense of Himself Before the Sanhedrin.

by Favell Lee Mortimer

Favell Lee Mortimer explores Christ's defense before the Sanhedrin, emphasizing His unity with the Father and the promise of resurrection and judgment.

Scripture: John 5:17-28, Romans 6:23, Hebrews 4:12

Topics: "Christ's Divinity", "Eternal Judgment"

Description

Favell Lee Mortimer preaches about Jesus defending Himself against the Jews who accused Him of Sabbath-breaking, claiming equality with God. Jesus explains that He and the Father are united in their works because they are one God, and He demonstrates His divinity through the power to give life and execute judgment. Jesus foretells a time when all will hear His voice for resurrection, leading to either eternal life or damnation, a declaration that has the power to awaken sinners to seek forgiveness and holiness.

Transcript

This is part of our Lord's defense of himself against the Jews. We know not in what place he made this defense. Some think he made it before the great council of seventy people, called the Sanhedrin; and others think He made it in the temple. But all must allow that he made it publicly to the great and learned Jews, who were his deadly enemies, and who even then sought to kill him. They wanted to find an accusation against him, and the accusation they now made was that of Sabbath-breaking.

The first sentence our Savior uttered in his defense is difficult to understand--Ver. 17. "My Father works hitherto, and I work."

What works did his Father work? He had made the world in six days, and had then rested. He had rested from creating, but not from preserving. God preserves man and beast continually. He is working in this manner on every side continually. Were he to cease from this work on the Sabbath-day, or on any other day, all creatures would sink into death; for it is God that preserves even the angels of heaven from death every moment. It is in Him we live, and move, and have our being. Jesus, in curing the paralytic, had done a work of this kind--he had renewed his life by imparting new strength to him. Thus the Jews were accusing him of sin for doing works which the Father was always doing, and which he also was always doing; for his Father and he were joined together in every work. Jesus, as well as the Father, had created

the world, and he, as well as the Father, upheld all things by the word of his power; therefore he said, "My Father works hitherto, and I work." And why are the Father and the Son always thus united in their works? Because they are one God--Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are one God.

The defense Jesus made of his work only brought fresh matter of accusation against him; because he had called God his Father, and thus had made himself equal with God. Now they not only accused him of breaking the Sabbath, but of the greater crime of blasphemy. And how did Jesus defend himself from the charge? Not by denying that He had said that He was equal with God, but by speaking of those great works which He would do, and which would show who He was. Those great works are to give life, and to execute judgment. Who could do such works but God himself! Even at the moment Jesus was speaking, He was able to give spiritual life to dead souls; for he said, (verse 25,) "The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear shall live." He has been doing this work ever since that hour. We do not see the dead souls arise, but Jesus does. He knows when he quickens a sinner who was dead in trespasses and sins. A time is approaching when his power will be publicly displayed as the Life, and as the Judge of the world, (verse 28.) "The hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth--those who have done good unto the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil unto the resurrection of damnation."

This is a dreadful declaration. It once awakened an aged sinner from the sleep of death. He went to the church where Joseph Milner preached, and heard this passage given out as the text. He heard no more, for the words took possession of his mind, and filled him with anguish. He sought the Lord, obtained forgiveness, and became as eminent for holiness as he had before been for iniquity. God alone knows all the conquests of his own word. Verses of Scripture which are heard by many with indifference, have, through the power of the Holy Spirit, given life to souls now rejoicing in the presence of God.

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