

- If God stopped working for one instant, the whole universe would be annihilated, because *in Him we live and move and exist* (Acts 17:28).¹

John 5:5 *A man was there who had been ill for thirty-eight years.*

The Pool of Bethesda

Certain manuscripts lack the words that others include as verse 4,² which state an angel of the Lord went down at certain seasons and stirred up the water.

While it is true that some manuscripts omit the end of John 5:3 and all of verse 4, it is also true that the event (and the man's words in John 5:7) would make little sense if these words are eliminated. Something extraordinary kept all these people with disabilities at this pool, hoping for a cure.³

There is almost no indication that the man had faith in Christ when Jesus healed him.⁴

- Our sovereign God does not need our faith in order to intervene in His world supernaturally.⁴

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 cure was immediate, through the power of the Lord's spoken word.³

The Controversy

John 5:10 *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."*

Nowhere in the Word of God does it say it is unlawful for a person who has been healed of paralysis to carry his bed. But the rabbis, in their historical interpretation of the law, had enumerated thirty-nine specific types of work that were illegal on the Sabbath day, and the thirty-ninth rule of Sabbath observance was the prohibition of carrying something from one place to another.¹

Their accusation was ill founded. Generally speaking, the biblical Sabbath laws forbid doing what is part of one's normal employment, with exceptions for those who perform life-critical duties.⁴

- Jesus told the leaders that He had the same right to work on the Sabbath that His Father did.⁴

Jesus healed a demoniac on the Sabbath (Luke 4:31-37). He would heal a man's withered hand on the Sabbath (Matthew 12:1-8). He deliberately challenged the legalistic traditions of the scribes and Pharisees.³

An Unwilling Witness

The healed man said, "This fellow who healed me told me to carry my bed."¹

Genesis 3:12 *The man said, "The woman whom You gave to be with me, she gave me from the tree, and I ate."*

- If you are embarrassed by Jesus and you're afraid to confess Him before men, either change your behavior or cease to call yourself a Christian.¹

John 5:14 *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."*

We would be wrong to conclude that every sickness results from an individual's sin. Yet, that does not mean that no sicknesses are caused by evil choices, for we know that some sinful behaviors can spread disease.⁴

- As good as it was to walk again, that healing would be ultimately insignificant if he continued to violate the law of God.⁴

This man, who received the physical blessing of healing, apparently never went past the physical to saving faith.¹

The Son of the Father

One thing that most Christian heresies have in common is a denial of the deity of Christ, often accompanied by the assertion the Jesus never claimed to be God.⁴

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."*

- When Jesus said "my Father" instead of the usual "our Father", used by the Jews, He claimed to be equal with God.³
- On several occasions Jesus taught things that amounted to a claim of deity.⁴

The Jewish leaders understood His claim. The penalty for such blasphemy was death. It is here that the official persecution of Jesus began, culminating in His crucifixion.³

- Jesus made Himself equal with God because He is God.³

Trinitarian doctrine of inseparable operations *n* : the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit act as a unified whole in everything that They do with respect to creation; what the Father does is what the Son does is what the Spirit does⁴

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."*

The Westminster Larger Catechism

Q. 10 *What are the personal properties of the three persons in the Godhead?* ⁵

A. It is proper to the Father to beget the Son, ^p and to the Son to be begotten of the Father, ^q and to the Holy Ghost to proceed from the Father and the Son from all eternity. ^r ⁵ – p. **Heb. 1:5-6, 8**; q. **John 1:14, 18**; r. **John 15:26**; **Gal. 4:6**

In terms of the *ontological* Trinity, the three persons are distinguished by what the Westminster Larger Catechism calls “their personal properties” (WLC 9). With regard to the *economic* Trinity, we distinguish among the three persons of the Godhead in terms of their roles in creation and redemption. So, even though the Father and the Son are equal in power, glory, and being, and even though there is no eternal subordination within the *ontological* Trinity, nevertheless there is a subordination of the Son to the Father in the *economy* of redemption. ¹

The Father does the work in a manner fitting to His being eternally unbegotten. The Son does the work in a manner fitting to His being begotten of the Father. The Spirit does the work in a matter fitting to His eternally proceeding from the Father and the Son. But it is the same work. ⁴

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;”*

“The Father has life in himself, which none gave him, while the Son has life in himself which the Father gave him.” – Augustine of Hippo ⁴

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, 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.”* ⁶

In this section, Jesus spoke about four different resurrections: 1) the resurrection of lost sinners into eternal life; 2) the resurrection of our Lord Himself; 3) the future resurrection of life, when believers are raised from the dead; and 4) the resurrection of condemnation. ³

The *resurrection of life*, or first resurrection, will include all believers (in stages), and the *resurrection of judgment* will involve unbelievers at the end of the Millennium. ⁶ At the last day, to those who have done good, the Son will grant the resurrection of life – they will receive new physical bodies that will be preserved forever (5:28-29). ⁴

- The fact that Jesus has the authority to raise the dead is proof that He is equal with the Father, and therefore He is God. ³

John 5

The claim to have power to raise the dead was a blasphemous thing in the eyes of the Jewish leaders. Jehovah held the three great keys: ³

- the key to open the heavens and give rain (Deut. 28:12);
- the key to open the womb and give conception (Gen. 30:22);
- the key to open the grave and raise the dead (Ezek. 37:13).

Pharisees, Sadducees, and other Jewish sects held some essential theological beliefs in common. All Jews affirmed: ⁴

- The Lord is the author of all life because of texts such as Genesis 2:7, which says He made Adam a “living creature” by breathing into him the breath of life.
- Another text, Psalm 90:2, proclaims that the God of Israel is “from everlasting to everlasting.”
- Only He has the power of life in Himself.
- He is inherently alive and is incapable, in His divine nature, of death.
- He has always been and ever will be.
- As life itself, He grants life to those whom He will.

Witnesses to Christ

John 5:31 *“If I alone testify about Myself; My testimony is not true.”*

Witness No. 1: John the Baptist

John 5:33 *“You have sent to John, and he has testified to the truth.”*

Witness No. 2: Miracles

But the Bible also records miracles performed by ordinary men, such as Moses, Elijah, and Paul. ³

- Miracles in the Bible do *not* prove the existence of God. The existence of God is established before a single miracle takes place. ¹

miracle *n* : a work that only God can do ¹

Satan can perform incredibly clever tricks, but they are not true miracles. Satan cannot create something out of nothing. ¹

- Jesus’ miracles confirmed Him as Messiah and mediator of the new covenant. ⁴

Miracles serve to authenticate the messenger sent from God. ¹

Witness No. 3: The Father

John 5:32, 37 *“There is another who testifies of Me, and I know that the testimony which He gives about me is true.” , “And the Father who sent Me, He has testified of Me. You have neither heard His voice at any time nor seen His form.”*

February 14, 2019 A.D.

The voice of God gave audible testimony to His Son on two occasions: 1) at Jesus' baptism (Matt. 3:17); and 2) at Jesus' transfiguration (Matt. 17:5).¹

Witness No. 4: The Scriptures

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; and you are unwilling to come to Me so that you may have life."*

Many Jews thought the mere study of Scripture would be rewarded with eternal life, but the study of Scripture cannot produce eternal life when study is pursued as its own end.⁴

Witness No. 5: Moses

John 5:45-46 *"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. For if you believed Moses, you would believe Me, for he wrote about Me."*

Here, Jesus affirmed the authorship of the Pentateuch by the hand of Moses.¹

Witness No. 6: The Apostle Paul

Acts 17:30-31 *"Therefore having overlooked the times of ignorance, God is now declaring to men that all people everywhere should repent, because He has fixed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness through a Man whom He has appointed, having furnished proof to all men by raising Him from the dead."*

Note how Paul's approach differs from modern techniques of evangelism. The apostle did not say, "But now God invites all men to repent." Why? Because you can decline an invitation with impunity, but you cannot refuse God's command to repent with impunity.¹

impunity *n* : exemption or freedom from punishment, harm, or loss

- The eternal life that the Son grants begins even now, through faith (5:24).⁴

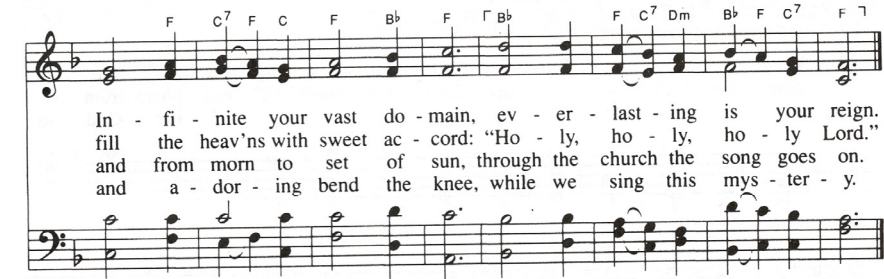
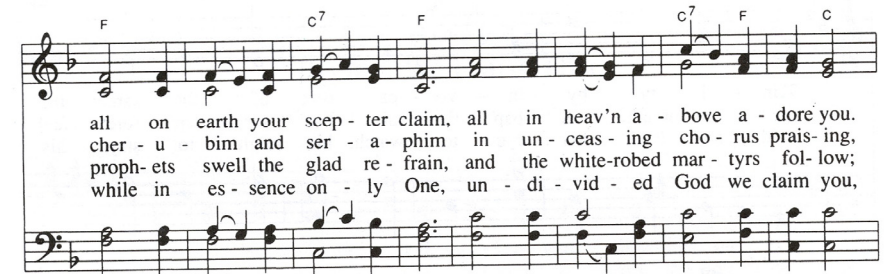
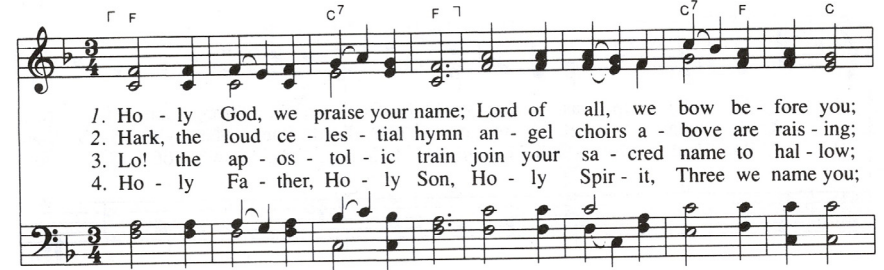
John 5:24 *"Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears My word, and believes Him who sent Me, has eternal life, and does not come into judgment, but has passed out of death into life."*

God's love is so deep and so profound, He sent His only begotten Son. He did not love the world so much that He sent multiple saviors.¹

- The question is not, "Why is there *only* one way?", but "Why is there *even* one way."¹

Holy God, We Praise Your Name

Holy, holy, holy is the LORD Almighty; the whole earth is full of his glory. Is. 6:3



Based on *Te Deum*, ca. 4th cent.
Attr. to Ignace Franz, ca. 1774
Tr. by Clarence A. Walworth, 1853; alt. 1990, mod.

GROSSER GOTT, WIR LOBEN DICH 7.8.7.8.7.7.
Katholisches Gesangbuch, Vienna, ca. 1774

- ¹ *John (St. Andrew's Expository Commentary)*, R. C. Sproul, 2009, pp. 33-53, 75-97
- ² *The Reformation Study Bible*, pp. 1952-1954
- ³ *Be Alive*, Warren W. Wiersbe, 1986, pp. 54, 59, 77-89
- ⁴ *Tabletalk* magazine, 2018, Robert Rothwell, March pp. 51-55, April pp. 35-38
- ⁵ *The Westminster Larger Catechism*, 1647
- ⁶ *New American Standard Bible*, Charles Caldwell Ryrie *study Bible*, 1995