

Stage IV. The Great Galilean Ministry

C. The Second Passover of Jesus’ Ministry

2. Jesus Claims to be Equal With God the Father

The DAILY JESUS NEWS #061

Base Text: JN 5.15-20 (Parallel Texts: None)

15 The man went away and announced to the Jewish leaders that it was Jesus who had made him whole.
16 So, because Jesus was doing these things on the Sabbath, the Jewish leaders were persecuting him.

17 In his defense Jesus said to them, *"My Father is always at his work to this very moment, so I too, am always working."*

18 For this reason they were seeking all the more to kill him; for not only was he continually breaking the Sabbath, but he kept on calling God his own Father, making himself equal with God.

19 Jesus answered by saying to them: *"Very truly I tell you, the Son can do nothing by himself, except for what he is seeing that his Father is in the process of doing... because whatever the Father is doing--that is what the Son does in the same way."*

20 *"For the Father is always loving the Son, and showing him all he does. Yes, and he will show him even greater works than these, so that you will be in a constant state of amazement."*

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NOTE: We use superscript identification of the source gospel in "blended texts" as follows: Matthew = ^{MT}, Mark = ^M, Luke = ^L, John = ^J, Acts = ^A. This "superscript ID" is inserted at the beginning of the quoted text, identifying that Bible book until a different superscript appears. In addition, *the words of Jesus are italicized in red*. Old Testament quotations are CAPITALIZED.

	CONTEXT DIGEST
Location	The Temple Courts, Jerusalem
Timeline	Early April, 31 AD (Month Fifteen)
Jesus’ Life Context	Stage IV: The Great Galilean Ministry
	C. The 2 nd Passover of Jesus’ Ministry
Title	2. Jesus Claims to Be Equal To God the Father

COMMENT:

In these verses Jesus declared some of the most mind-boggling Divine claims of his entire ministry. As the leaders were so keenly aware, Jesus was making himself equal to the Father—a Divine claim without peer in all the Scriptures.

This kind of thinking on Jesus' part is what birthed the doctrine of the Trinity—that God is ONE Divine nature, shared co-equally in three distinct Persons: Father, Son, and Spirit. Jesus never specifically defined the doctrine of the Trinity, but he constantly lived the reality of it, and bore witness to it in passages such as these.

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Jesus continually affirmed his essential oneness and equality in the Divine nature with his Father, yet they were simultaneously distinct personalities and beings. There were not two different natures and Gods--they were one, yet two at the same time. From the first verse of the gospel of John this mystery was expressed and affirmed. The same was true of the Spirit--thus God is one Divine nature in three distinct persons...the Trinity.

At the heart of what Jesus said here is this: He is qualified to work on the Sabbath because he is God, in exactly the same way that his Father is God.

The Old Testament testifies that on the seventh "day" of creation, God "rested" from further work (Gen. 2,2), not because he was tired, but because the work was complete, and there was nothing more to add to it. God's rest did not mean that God ceased to uphold and manage the universe he had created--he never stopped working in that sense--he merely stopped adding any new forms of created beings to what he had already made. Having achieved perfection, God's "rest" was an acknowledgement that the need for any more original creation was over.

Don't forget that John has already stated in 1.3 that Jesus was the actual agent of creation. **"Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made."** Jesus was the **"Word"**-- the one who spoke out in the "days" described in Genesis 1 and 2, but because God is a Trinity, the Father was also working "through him," and the "Spirit of God" was also present and cooperating as well (Gen 1.2).

So, the Father, Son and Spirit worked in perfect unity as God in creation. They entered into "rest" together from creating any new life-forms. Then they continued to actively sustain and manage every quark, atom, molecule, cell, structure, and living being they had made, as part of the full-time "work" of being God.

The Trinity has never taken one second of rest from actively sustaining and controlling the universe since the beginning of time. Everything in creation would implode if they did.

Because Jesus, the Father and Spirit are One Divine Being that co-exist in three Persons, they are always in loving communication, and they always work together. However, Jesus added genuine humanity to his Divine nature when he became a man. In his humanity, he is subservient to the Father, while he is also ONE with the Father in his eternal Divinity. I

n his earthly life Jesus always took the proper human position of subservience to his Father. He is our perfect example in this. He refused to act on his own human initiative--he always sought to follow and lovingly obey his Father's direction in order to maintain his eternal oneness with his Father.

Therefore, Jesus was LORD of the human Sabbath, for his Father never stopped working, so neither did he. His Father loved him, and was always showing Jesus what Divine work he was engaging in. As God, Jesus was perfectly qualified to join the Father and Spirit in ANY work that they were doing. In fact Jesus could do no less, because he, the Father and Spirit were One Divine nature actively living harmoniously in three distinct persons.

If Jesus had refused to join his Father in "working" on the Sabbath it would be an admission that he was NOT Divine! God never takes a vacation. The continuance of the entire universe is predicated upon that fact.

These are the truths that Jesus took for granted, and declared in his own defense when charged with blasphemy for claiming to be God.

APPLICATION:

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Jesus refused to act on his own, independent initiative. He always coordinated, cooperated, and communed with his Father in everything he was doing. This is one of the most important aspects of Jesus' human example for each of us.

We should be even more submissive to, and dependent upon Jesus, than he was to the Father. We naturally act in our own initiatives—according to what we think or feel—every day. As followers of Jesus we are constantly learning to live a different way; by adjusting ourselves to his initiatives and direction rather than our own. It is a life-long process of learning to follow Jesus more fully.

What aspect of your current life-style was not initiated by Jesus—it did not come from him? Awareness is the first step to being changed by Jesus.

What specific behavioral or thought-pattern do you need to bring to Jesus to change into his way of thinking and doing?

How will you “rest” in his power to accomplish the needed change in you?