

Jeff Whitebread
PO Box 123, Harrisburg, PA 17108
484-680-4260
Jeff.Whitebread@capitolcom.org

Will We Learn from Jesus? *John 5:19-29*

CAPITOL BIBLE STUDY 201st General Assembly

- **TUESDAY (SESSION) @ 8:00 AM**
IN ROOM 203, RYAN BLDG.
- **WEDNESDAY (EVERY) @ 1:00 PM**
IN ROOM 203, RYAN BLDG.

Capitol Commission Bible studies are held on Tuesday and Wednesday. The legislator Bible study meets from 8:00-8:45 AM in Room 203, Ryan Bldg. (during session weeks). An open-to-all Bible study meets from 1:00-1:30 PM in Room 203, Ryan Bldg. (during session weeks). The Bible studies are nonpartisan and non-denominational, and will focus on the Gospel of John for the 2017 General Assembly.

– Jeff Whitebread, Pennsylvania State Minister, Capitol Commission

John 5:19-29: “Will We Learn from Jesus?”

For high school, I attended Columbia-Montour Vo-Tech and was part of the Drafting program. One of the important aspects of being a draftsman, at least when I was learning this trade, was your ability to print neatly. In the past, a draftsman's lettering of a drawing would set work apart and give it a distinctive quality from others.

In my class, there were those who had a natural flair, and were quickly recognized for the quality of the drawings they produced. I, on the other hand, struggled much of my sophomore year. As I recall, I spent much time with my drafting teacher who worked with me to develop a consistent printing style that was passable.

Initially I would spend time watching him print, and then he would watch me. We would talk about printing, look at different styles, and in the end, after much effort and many fits and starts, we developed an approach that I could grow into and continue to improve in the years to come.

While this method of training has become rare in the Western world, there are still places where this is the normal way that skills are passed down to the other generations. This is particularly true where the business involves working a skilled trade with one's hands. Apprenticeship meant working side-by-side, with the son watching every move the father makes and learning to do it exactly the same way.

Jesus Learn from His Father?

John 5:19: In a sense, Jesus has this type of relationship with the Father. In this verse Jesus explains this model of apprenticeship by saying he would do only what he sees his Father doing. In this he is revealing more fully, than ever before, how Israel's God is now working in a new way. Jesus is

watching carefully to see what God is doing in the world, so he can join the Father in all he is doing, all the while keeping with his style and plan. Interestingly, this deeper and fuller revelation that Jesus brings has been given because of the affection the Father has for Jesus his Son. In a sense, Jesus was prepared to handle the depth of God's nature and character.

John 5:21: Now the truly remarkable thing that the Father is working to bring about is this: he is giving life to the dead. Here again, God is showing the plan to the son so that the son can then do it with him and on his behalf. This is critical aspect in apprenticeship. Can the student take up the responsibility of carrying out the master's work, in his name?

John 5:22: Jesus tells us that the Father judges no one, but he leaves this assessment in the hands of the son for one reason, God wants the son to be exalted. One may ask, why is this so important? Because it is the Son, the Word who has come down in flesh who communicates God's intention, purpose and character. So that in honoring Jesus, God is also honored for who he truly is. For the Son comes from the Father, he is sent by the Father, and shows us exactly what the Father is like. For those who want to know what God is like, you must take a good hard look at Jesus.

Reflection:

We are catching a glimpse of the beauty, wonder, and goodness of the relationship between the Father and the Son. We see the Son's wholehearted commitment to do all that the Father would have him do. This was not simply occasional obedience when the mood struck Jesus, or a one-time commitment to do the will of the Father at the cross only; but it was the pattern of a life whose one intention was to do whatever the Father does.

Jesus says that we must honor the Son, for this the critical test of whether we truly honor God. The essential aspect in any relationship with Jesus is this: do we think he knows what he is talking about in our real life? Will we take the time to learn from him how to become one of those who do whatever they see him doing? It is easy to look at abstract concepts when dealing with Father, but Jesus make things concrete, his teachings are clear, and his life leaves no wiggle room. It all comes down to this, are we following Jesus, is he our teacher, and are we becoming those who increasingly do what he would do in our place or faced with our circumstances?

Now, the question that strikes to the heart of my condition is this, am I committed to do all that Jesus said. Am I willing to look at the totality of Jesus' life and become his apprentice in kingdom living? *William Penn* in his book *No Cross No Crown* reminds us of the sacred responsibility we

Will We Learn from Jesus (cont'd) - *John 5:19-29*

December 5, 2017 • www.capitolcom.org/pennsylvania • <http://www.pray1tim2.org/states/pa>

bear with these words, “for true worshipping of God is doing his will...The rest in a false compliment, like him who said he would go, and did not (Matt 21:30).

The Offer: Real and Lasting Life

John 5:24: Jesus continues with more truth. This truth is being presented to those who can make no sense of him healing on the Sabbath. Their response to his actions reveal hearts that do not know God. He heals a man and they are angry because he broke “the law.” Then they seek to kill him because he is making himself equal to God.

What we do with Jesus words is of utmost importance. Will we believe what he is saying and understand that his words come from the Father. If we do, we can, at this very moment have real, lasting life and no longer be condemned to be an outsider, an orphan, one who distant from God, and dead to a life lived with him. Moving from a life in which we are alone in this world to one in which life with God is accessible comes to those who believe, those who receive, those who place their confidence in Jesus and decide that he is right in his understanding of everything. He is not only right about forgiveness of sin, and going to heaven when we die, but he us right about everything.

John 5:25: Jesus brings clarity on the timing when the dead will hear, and those that hear will live. The time is now, it was taking place in that very moment, and in the very words that Jesus speaks. Those who are dead, not physically but spiritually, are hearing the voice of God through the Son. They are hearing the good news Jesus brings to the world, and anyone can step into this life with God right where they are at through confidence in Jesus.

John 5:26: He tells his audience he has life within himself, this life of God which the Father has in himself, he has granted the Son also to have in himself. This is what Jesus has come to do, to bring eternal life to those who are dead spiritually?

Reflection:

For us to make sense of eternal life, it important to ask, in a general sense, what is life? Life is the power to act and respond in specific kinds of relations. For example, a cabbage has certain kind of power of action and response that corresponds to life. Now, there is a big difference between a live cabbage and a dead one, though a dead one still exists. This can also be said of a goldfish, or a kitten.

But a live cabbage can make no response to, let's say, a ball of string. Though alive as a cabbage it is dead to the realm of play. In like manner, a kitten playing with a ball of string can make no sense of numbers and poetry, in this way the kitten is dead to arithmetic and literature. A live cabbage, though dead to one realm, that of play, is alive in another - that of the soil, sun, and rain,

The same is true for human beings who were once alive to God. They were created by him and were responsive and interacted with him. When Adam and Eve mistrusted God and disobeyed him, that cut them off from the realm of the Spirit. They became dead in relation to it - much like a kitten is dead to arithmetic.

It would be necessary for God to confer an additional level of life on us, “being born from above,” (John 3:3) in order for us once again to be alive to God, to be able to align our will with his purposes, and act within the realm of the Spirit. If you image an otherwise normal kitten that suddenly begins to appreciate and compose poetry, that image will give you the impression of the huge transition involved in this additional birth.

Those born of the Spirit manifest a different kind of life. Remember that a life is a definite range of activities and responses. The spirit-born exhibit a life that originates from an invisible spiritual realm and its power. In natural terms one cannot explain what is happening to them, just as with the wind and its effects (John 3:8). We recognize the presence of God's activity in a person's life by its effects in and around them.

And so, how would we understand this life from above? One of the best description I have come across is from Dallas Willard who says, it life of interaction with God in which there is abiding peace, it is a life permeated through by love. It is faith that sees everything - even our losses and failure - in light of God's overriding governance for good. It is hopefulness that stands firm in the most discouraging of circumstances. It is the power to do what is right and withstand the forces of evil.

Isn't this the life we most desire? I know it is for me. The greatest offer of our lives stands before us, we can step right into this life with God by becoming an apprentice of Jesus, one who is learning from him, one who is joining him in what he is already doing; just as he did what his Father.

Book referenced:

Wright, NT. John for Everyone. Louisville, KY: John Knox Press, 2002
Willard, Dallas. Hearing God: In Search of Divine Guidance. Downers Grove, IL: IV Press. 1999

Penn, William. No Cross No Crown. Cassville, MO: Litho Printers & Bindery. 2012

Legislator Bible study: Tuesday (Session), at 8 AM,
Room 203 - Ryan Office Building
Open-To-All Bible Study: Wednesday(Session), at 1
PM, Room 203 - Ryan Office Building