

Like Father, Like Son, Like You (Is God a Monster)?

John 5:18-29

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Video and audio versions available online:

<https://relentless-love.org/sermons/like-father-like-son-like-you-is-god-a-monster/>

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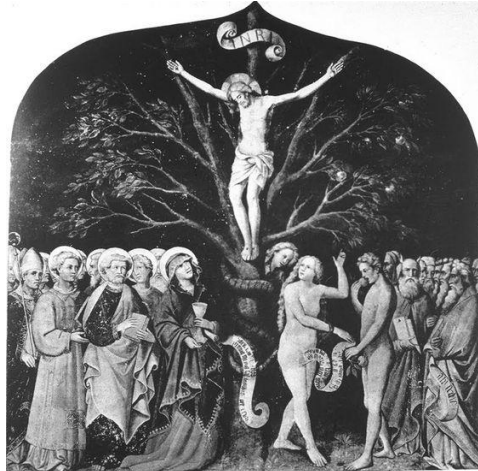
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Message

As most of you know, we've been preaching through the Gospel of John and our last message from John was three weeks ago before I took some vacation. In John 5, Jesus performs the third sign, which means that John wants us to ask, "What does this mean?" Jesus goes to the Pool of Bethesda, which means "House of Mercy," and he heals an invalid who had been competing for Mercy. For the legend was that the first one into the pool after an angel troubled the water, would be healed. So, the first would be first and the last would be last. But Jesus heals the last who couldn't make himself first and, perhaps, didn't even want to be healed. John points out that there were "a multitude of invalids" around the pool, which raises a question, "Why would Jesus heal this one and not all?" Imagine if you were one of those other invalids, you might ask, "Is God some sort of Monster?"

The Jews got angry that Jesus would heal this man on the Sabbath. And so, we wonder, "Are they emotional invalids? Are they monsters?" Jesus then finds the man in the stone temple, and says, "Stop sinning that nothing worse befall you." And that made us ask the question, "Was he still an invalid? Was everyone in that temple an invalid? Were they all competing for mercy?" The Jews confront Jesus with his crimes, But Jesus answered them, "My father is working until now, and I am working."

It's an utterly astounding statement meaning that it's still the 6th day of creation, we're still being made in the image of God, and the 7th day is yet to come when and where "everything is good" and "it is finished," as Jesus will soon say nailed to a tree in a garden as we all take his life.



"The Fall and Redemption of Man" by Giovanni da Modena

Utterly astounding statement, loaded with infinite hope, and they can't hear it; all they can hear is that Jesus referred to God as "His Father." You see, I think they're all competing for Mercy (hesed in Hebrew) that is Unconditional Love—they're all competing for their Daddy's Love.

John 5:18:

Therefore the Jews sought the more to kill him, because he not only had broken the sabbath, but said also that God was his Father, making himself equal with God.

The Gospels record that even Pilate knew that it was because of envy that the rulers of the Jews handed Jesus over for crucifixion.ⁱ They were jealous of his relationship with God "our father," as Jesus referred to Him. They were each and all competing for Unconditional Love and apparently believed that there was only so much of it to go around. They were all invalids terrified that they might not obtain Mercy. Well, if God only heals some, he does seem to be rather mean, doesn't he? And if God only makes some people rich, doesn't it make you kind of jealous? And if God only saves some blessing them with endless bliss, while damning others to endless conscious torment, doesn't that make HIM something of a monster?

We believe in the resurrection of both the saved and the lost; they that are saved unto the resurrection of life and they that are lost unto the resurrection of damnation. – National Association of Evangelicals

This is the 6th line of "The Statement of Faith" for the National Association of Evangelicals. We believe in the resurrection of both the saved and the lost; they that are saved unto the resurrection

of life and they that are lost unto the resurrection of damnation. It's a little weird on the face of it, for it seems to be saying that "the Lost" are damned, which would imply that Jesus, who came to specifically "seek and save the lost," has failed. It's a statement of faith in the failure of the savior to save people from their sins. And yet the national association of Evangelicals gets this language for that statement from John chapter 5:28-29, which concludes our text this morning—John chapter 5:29 as translated by the translators of the King James Version in 1611:

Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation. – John 5:28-29 KJV

Now I'm not entirely sure what we all mean by "damnation," but I think that most mean "endless conscious torment," and if not that, at least some torment and then annihilation, but either way, it all seems rather monstrous. One half of the church would argue that God simply chooses people through no merit of their own, (like Jesus seems to have chosen the man at the pool) chooses some for salvation and others for damnation. So, God is Unconditional Love to some, and an absolute beast to others, and to me that sounds like the worst sort of monster.

The other half of the church would argue that it's not God that chooses us, but each of us that chooses, or doesn't choose, God. That seems helpful at first until you realize that you—a little child of God—have the power to change your Father from the Perfect Father to the Most Horrifying Beast, which really is the worst type of all monsters, for then everything is your fault. Unconditional Love is entirely conditioned by you.

You know movies about beasts, like bats or wolves, just aren't all that scary, but movies about vampires and wolfmen—men that turn into bats and beasts—can be utterly terrifying.ⁱⁱ Now if you don't like scary movies, you can close your eyes but just imagine if this man was your father.

Video clip: *Van Helsing*
Universal Pictures (2004)

Scene takes place in a darkened room. Anna Vaerious (Kate Beckinsale) looks on in disbelief as Velkan (Will Kemp) backs away and begins to transform into a werewolf. He backs up a wall, looks out the window, sees a full moon, and tells Anna to run as he transforms.

I'm not a healthcare professional, but I think it's safe to say that even if you only suspected your father of being a wolfman, a vampire, or a Mister Hyde hidden in a Dr. Jekyll. If you just suspected that he had two natures, that suspicion would have a profound effect on your daily life. You might appear very obedient, respectful, well-adjusted, and compliant. And yet, your heart would be emotionally isolated, trapped within a prison of fear, and unable to love.

When an alcoholic gets drunk or an addict gets high, it's often as if another person shows up. So, the child of an alcoholic doesn't know what, or whom, to expect. And so learns to not trust, which creates a prison, a prison of shame and fear. I once knew a man who, as a child, ran down the stairs to see his mother hanging on to the stock of a rifle which his father was waving around the room, in a drunken stupor. As his mother screamed in terror, he was yelling "Where are them sons of bitches? I'm gonna' kill em all!" The Police came and threw him in prison, but he wasn't the only one in prison, so were the hearts of his twelve children who loved their father but were terrified of the beast that had threatened to kill them.

The US department of health and human services posts this list of characteristics of adult children of alcoholics.ⁱⁱⁱ Everything on the list sounds like me, and neither of my parents were alcoholics. Everything on the list sounds like me and, honestly, like every person I know. If you're an alcoholic, I hope you know that everything can be redeemed and that alcoholism is certainly not the most heinous of addictions. In fact, all sin is addiction—all sin is an addiction to saving the self with the self, and all sin creates a false self, that divides persons far more deeply than any glass of booze. But my point is this: if your dad is divided, you'll most likely be divided too. And if your dad is a monster, you'll most likely become a monster too. And even if your dad isn't a monster, you only have to believe that he might be a monster, to become a monster too.

I really had a great Dad. And so, most of the time I trusted his judgments more than my own—in other words I wanted to do his will. And yet at times, I didn't, and he disciplined me because he loved me. Discipline is hard for fathers, because it doesn't look like Mercy although that is exactly what it is—severe Mercy. Scripture says, "The Lord disciplines the one he loves and chastises every son whom he receives... if you are left without discipline, in which all have participated, then you are illegitimate children and not sons."^{iv} "In which all have participated," which means that none are illegitimate or in-valid, for all are sons. And yet, sons that are being disciplined are particularly susceptible to a lie and this is the lie: "Your Father isn't one but two; he is a monster." There have been times that my children looked at me, and I knew they were asking this question: "Do you love me now? Are you one or two?" I know that I can be two, but in those moments, something in me or someone in me, thinks "I'd die to show you, I'm not two but one, and I am all for you."

The oldest recognized heresy in the Christian Church is the Marcionite Heresy. In the 2nd century, Marcion of Sinope taught that the God of the Old Testament is a different God than the God of the New Testament. He taught that Yahweh was vindictive, like a beast, and the Father of Jesus was Love and Mercy, like the best of fathers. The Marcionite faith passed away within a few hundred years, but the belief that God is not one, but two, came roaring back. It may be more prevalent today than at any time in history. You know that the early church was horrifically persecuted by the institutions of its day, but in 381 the church itself became the institution. Some

argue that the church conquered the Empire, but it may be truer to argue that the Empire conquered the church.^v

In Scripture, the Roman Empire is portrayed as a beast. The first great Roman Theologian was Augustine of Hippo, brilliant and wise in many ways, but also the first to argue for evangelism at the point of a sword. Some would also argue that he was the first to explicitly teach “endless torment” rather than “*aionios* punishment,” the punishment of the age. He had a horrid relationship with his own father, and he was the first to teach that God had two opposing attributes or natures: one being mercy and the other being not mercy, what he called “justice.” And yet, in Scripture, justice is the manifestation of Mercy—Justice, which means righteousness, is the incarnation of Unconditional Love. It’s not Scripture but the principalities and powers of this world that teach us that Justice is the opposite of Mercy.

In the 16th Century, the Reformers reformed the church back to Augustine, but there they stopped. And then, their followers developed the unbiblical doctrine of The Penal Substitutionary Atonement, which, in its current popular form, argues that God the Father is the God of revenging justice and God the Son is the God of Mercy, and so God the Father killed Jesus the Son to feel better about you. These people then preach that this God is your Father, that you are commanded to Love with Unconditional Love or be endlessly tortured by that God who is Unconditional Love and the very opposite of Unconditional Love: evil. And that’s how the National Association of Evangelicals, my old denomination, and evangelical seminaries have come to actually make people sign statements of faith in God’s inability to seek and to save the Lost. And now we all wonder how people that call themselves “Christian” could also be racists and Nazi’s, how they could be so divided. Well, read our statements of faith; every child imitates their father. They can’t help it. So...

- If you find yourself competing for Unconditional Love
- If you think that your Father in Heaven is two and not One
- If you think he just might give you the entire world, or perhaps on a whim or because you crossed some confusing line, he might kill you and raise you so he could torture you and kill you again forever and ever without end

Well, no amount of conventional therapy will help you.

Video clip: *Austin Powers: International Man of Mystery*
HandMade Films (1979)

A group of fathers and sons sit in a circle, attending a group therapy session.

Son (Steve Monroe) I love you dad (said through tears).

Dad (Vince Melocchi) I love you too son (said through tears).

Everyone in the room claps for them as they hug.

Therapist (Carrie Fisher) Ok, group, we have some newcomers here today with us.
Say hello to Scott and his father Mr...Avil?

Dr. Evil (Mike Myers) Evil, actually. Dr. Evil.

Everyone in room (in unison) Hello Dr. Evil. Hello Scott.

Scott (Seth Green) Hello everybody.

Therapist	So Scott, why don't we start with you? What brings you here with us today?
Scott	Well, I just really met my dad for the first time five days ago.
Dr. Evil	I was partially frozen his whole life.
Therapist	That is beautiful that you can admit to that.
Brian	He comes back and now he wants me to take over the family business.
Dr. Evil	But Scott, who's going to take over the world when I die?
Therapist	Listen to the words he used--"Who's going to over the world when I die. It feels like that to some of us sometimes, doesn't it? So, what do you want to do Scott?
Scott	I don't know, I was thinking I like animals. Maybe I'd be a vet.
Dr. Evil	An evil vet?
Scott	No. Maybe like working in a petting zoo.
Dr. Evil	An evil petting zoo?
Scott	You always do that! (Dr. Evil puts his palms up as if to say, 'what did I do?') I just think, like, he hates me. I really think he wants to kill me.
Therapist	Now Scott, we don't want to kill each other in here. We might say that we do sometimes, but we really don't. (Everyone breaks out in nervous laughter)
Dr. Evil	Actually, the boy's quite astute. I really am trying to kill him, but, so far, unsuccessfully. He's quite wily, like his old man.

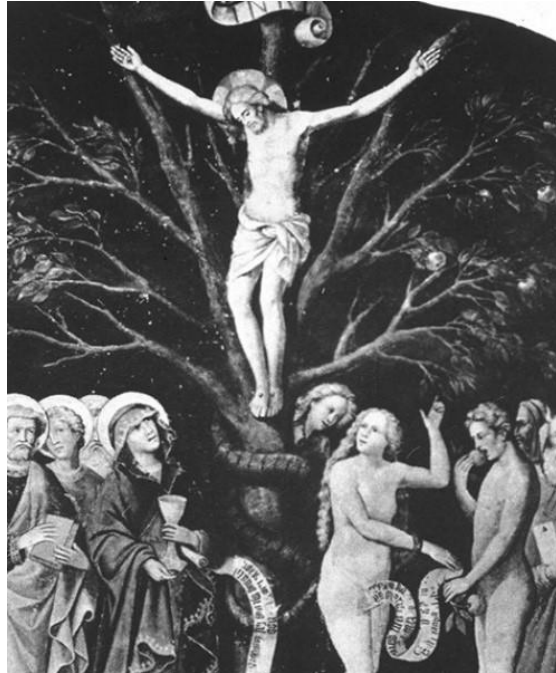
If that's your situation, Scott, you need something far more powerful than conventional therapy, a self-help book, wishful thinking, practical application points, or more laws; you need the Gospel.

In John 5:18, Jesus stands in the outer courts of the Old Stone Temple, next to the invalid he just healed at the Pool of the House of Mercy...

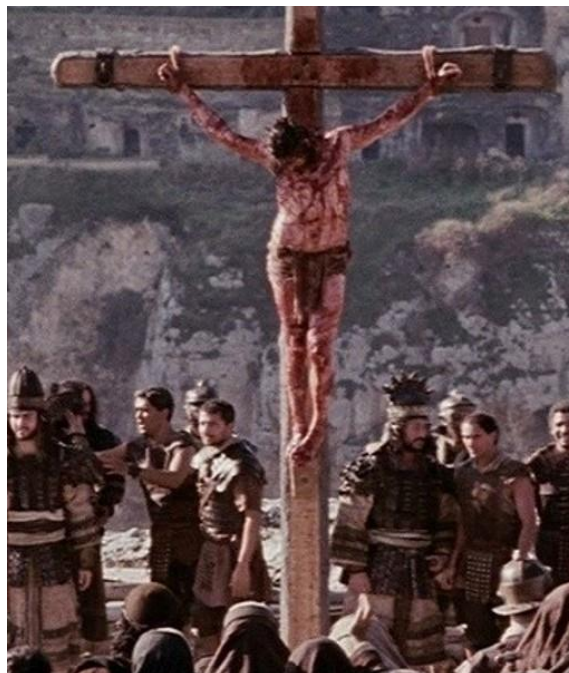
- surrounded by spiritual invalids including the man he just healed
- surrounded by brothers and sisters competing for their Father's Mercy
- surrounded by people terrified that God might be two and not One
- surrounded by Jews pretending to worship for they know it is required but secretly despising the one they worship for they think he is a monster

And now Jesus, from the bosom of the Father preaches the Gospel, John 5:19-29. This is not what the world would call common sense; this is the logos of Love; this is the Word of God speaking himself into your soul. So do what Michael suggested last week: take what you think you know about God, hold it in your hand, then hold out your fist, and just open your hand.

John 5:18: This was why the Jews were seeking all the more to kill him, because not only was he breaking the Sabbath, but he was even calling God his own Father, making himself equal with God. You know, a son can't make himself equal to his father, but a father can make a son equal to himself, and the son can acknowledge that this is so.^{vi} And according to Paul in Philippians 2:6, Jesus had equality but did not consider it "a thing to be grasped," unlike Eve and Adam.



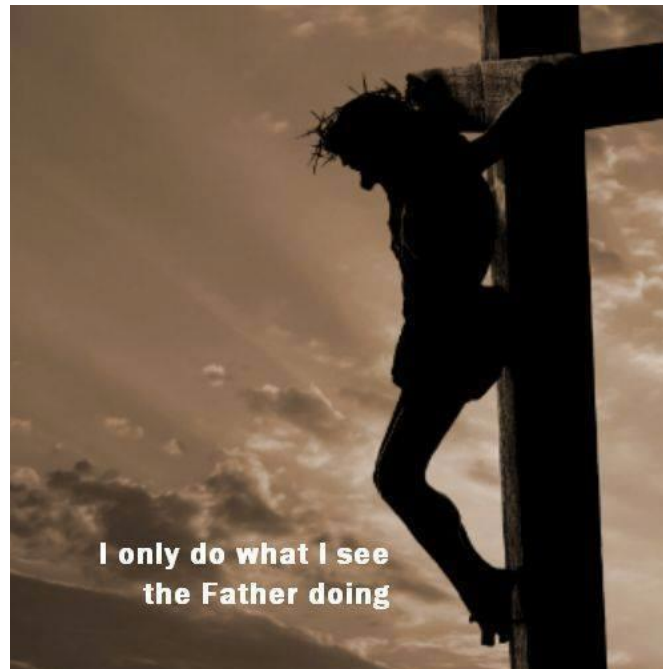
They did, and we still do, consider it something to be grasped, like fruit on a tree, but if it is still the 6th day, then God is still making Adam in his image and the story isn't over until the 7th day, when everything is Good and we hear the Word of God says, "It is finished."



And that means that all the invalids, not just one, and not just physical invalids—all the invalids will become valid in an ocean of Mercy. And that means that the father doesn't just heal one body, he heals all bodies, which are actually Christ's Body, which suffers until all see that this is true.

John 5:19a:

So Jesus said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of his own accord [of himself], but only what he sees the Father doing.



I love this meme: “I do only what I see my Father doing,” says Jesus hanging on the tree in the garden of Calvary on the Holy Mountain. So...

- Could the Son forgive if the Father didn’t forgive?
- Could God the Son, be Good if God, the Father, wasn’t Good?
- Could God the Son, choose something that God the Father does not choose?
- Could Jesus WILL what God does not will? I don’t think so.

He is the Will and Word and Commandment of the Father And yet in the garden, Jesus prayed to the Father saying, “Nevertheless, not as I will but as you will.” The only way that makes any sense to me is if Jesus, the Will of God, had somehow descended into me, who does will what God does not will, and willed the will of God for me, with me, and from within me. As St. Paul reveals, he is literally my righteousness, my justification. Even when you cry, especially when you cry, “My God my God, why have you forsaken me,” it’s Him praying for you, with you, and from within you. It’s the Truth in you making you honest to God.

5:19-22:

So Jesus said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of his own accord, but only what he sees the Father doing. For whatever the Father does, that the Son does likewise. ²⁰ For the Father loves the Son and shows him all that he himself is doing. And greater works than these will he show him, so that you may marvel. ²¹ For as the Father raises the dead [not “some dead,” but “the dead”] and gives them life, so also the Son gives life to whom he will. ²² For

the Father judges [*krino* (v): to separate, to choose]... **The Father judges no one** [*oudeis*: nothing, no one] **but has given all** [the] **judgment** [*krisis*: (n.): separation, choice]

The Father has given all judgment (literally “the Judgment” as if there’s only one Judgment^{vii}) The Father has given all judgment to the Son. Can you imagine these two guys going out to dinner: “Jesus, where would you like to go for dinner? Pizza, cheeseburgers, Italian, Mexican?” “I don’t know, you pick Father.” “No, you pick son.” “No, you pick Dad. I only do, and can only do what you do, and you don’t judge, but give the judgment away.” It would literally be a *krisis* of non-*krisis*, non-judgment; It would literally be the Judgment of Non- judgment. Perhaps that’s something like the judgment of Grace. I don’t think we can fully understand this, but he isn’t asking us to understand, only believe. The Father judges no one but has given all judgement to the Son. “All judgment,” that’s all decisions, all choices; that’s running the world.

People mean all sorts of things when they use the term “Free Will.” But if anyone truly has “free-will,” wouldn’t it be God? God wills reality into existence with his Word. Creation is God’s Choice to “Let it all be.” Creation is the expression of God’s will—His Free will. People mean different things by “Free Will” You may think that your will is free because you can will your own bag of dust to do things; It’s MIND over MATTER, that is your own bag of dust, your body. You can will your arm to move and your feet to walk, for a time, and yet that causes problems, for your will can come into conflict with your neighbor’s will, and you realize neither will is entirely free. If all wills were entirely free, we’d soon destroy each other with flying mountains or will ourselves into outer darkness where we would be entirely alone. And maybe we try to do both. But Scripture doesn’t call that “freedom;” It calls that sin, death, hell, and bondage.^{viii} So anyway, you can move your dust, but not your neighbor’s dust. And you can only do that for a time because for some reason we all must die, and so our dust returns to the earth, and our spirits to God who gave them.^{ix}

But imagine if you had “free-will” like God has free-will. All creation is literally his bag of dust, His body. Creation is the expression of God’s will through his Word—His Word who became flesh, whose name is Jesus. God freely wills to give HIS free will to his son—So, he’s hardly a stingy father. He freely wills to give HIS free will to his son, which is what all good fathers do when their children are ready—they give them their world. But no good father grants free will to two-year-olds, and especially not in a room full of other two-year-olds—that would be evil. Instead, good fathers teach their children to know the Good and the evil, that they might one day choose the Good in freedom.

So, God and Jesus together, will stars into existence, invalids to pick up their beds and walk; They will a reality in which all work is rest, all sound makes a symphony, all movement is a dance and everything is Good and it is finished.

- They will the 7th day, the Sabbath Rest of God. AND
- They will for you to will what they will in freedom.

Listen to what Jesus says to his disciples in John 16:14-15: “The Spirit of Truth will glorify me for he will take what is mine. (And remember, all judgment belongs to Jesus; in fact, Free will is

Jesus) He will take what is mine and declare it to you. All that the Father has is mine; therefore, I said he will take what is mine and declare it to you.”

God is hardly a stingy father. In fact, he is so bound and determined to give you everything and himself that it is absolutely terrifying; You are predestined for absolute freedom. Evil isn't that terrifying; it's what we know and understand: We know bondage, grief, selfishness, and isolation; we know 38 years of lying by the pool of Bethesda or making sacrifices in the old stone temple. But Absolute Grace is Holy Terror and then, infinite and unceasing Joy.

What God wills is called “the Good” and “the Life” (God is what he wills), And the Good and the Life in flesh is Jesus (He is literally named “Salvation”). And the Spirit of God through Jesus takes all things, all judgment, and God himself, and declares them to you, his kid. Like Father, like Son, Like you. That honors Him.

A Father is NOT honored by children who bend the knee and speak his praises at the point of a sword. A Father is honored by children who bend the knee and speak his praises in absolute freedom for they have freely judged that his judgment is good. A Father is honored when his judgment becomes his children's judgment and so everyone begins to party—they cast their crowns before him as he constantly picks them up and puts them back on their heads. A Father is honored when his children judge him with his own judgment crying out “You are just in your judgment and righteous in all your ways.”^x

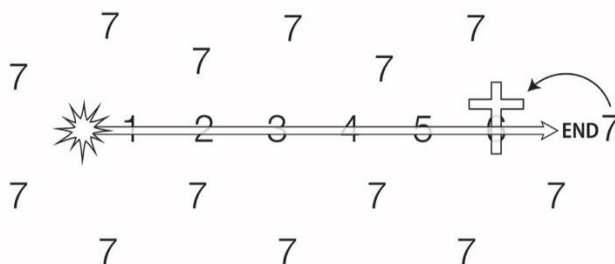
John 5:21-24a:

For as the Father raises the dead and gives them life (That's his Judgment), so also the Son gives life to whom he will. ²² For the Father judges no one but has given all [the] judgment to the Son, ²³ that all may honor the Son, just as they honor the Father. Whoever does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent him. (And that would be their own judgment) ²⁴ Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever hears my word [logos] and believes him who sent me has eternal life [zoen aionion: the life of the age]. He does not come into judgment [krisis]...

But what is judgment or the judgment, if God and Jesus don't judge? Our Father judges no one but has given all judgment to the Son and the Son can only do what he sees the father is doing, which would mean that the son doesn't judge and gives all judgment to someone else, who would that be? In John 7:4 Jesus commands all of us saying “Judge with just judgment...” But what judgment is the just judgment if God and Jesus don't judge? In John 8:15, Jesus says, “I judge no one. Yet even if I do judge, my judgement is true, for it is not I alone who judge, but I and the father who sent me.” So, the Father and the Son don't judge, but their relationship of not judging is somehow the Judgement. They don't judge but they are the Judgment—And that must be the very same judgment that the Holy spirit takes and declares to us. Jesus said, “All that the father has is mine...He will take what is mine and declare it to you...” Wouldn't that include the Judgment? A friend used to say, “The last judgment is the day I stop judging.”

In John 8, Jesus says, “I judge no one. Yet even if I do judge, my judgement is true, for it is not I alone who judge, but I and the father who sent me. Verse 26, I have much to say about you and much to Judge. Verse 28, when you have lifted up the son of man, then you will know that I

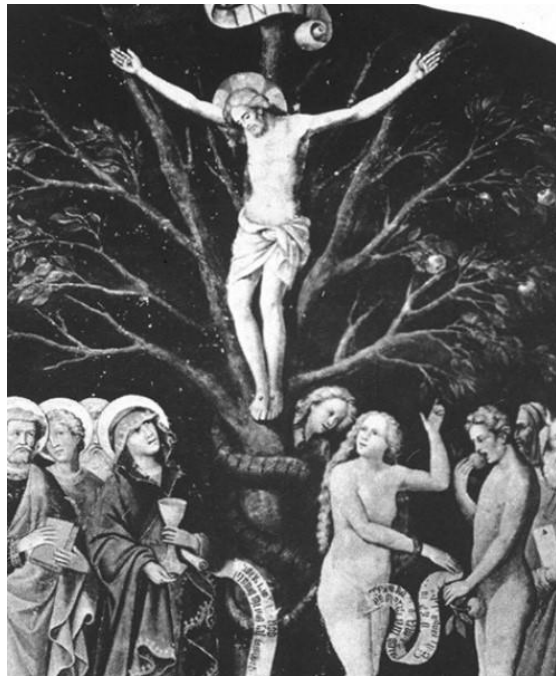
Am.” Jesus is the manifest presence of “I Am.” How could “I Am that I Am” make judgments? When we make judgments, we make them in space and time. We take knowledge, make judgments, and apply judgments in space and time.



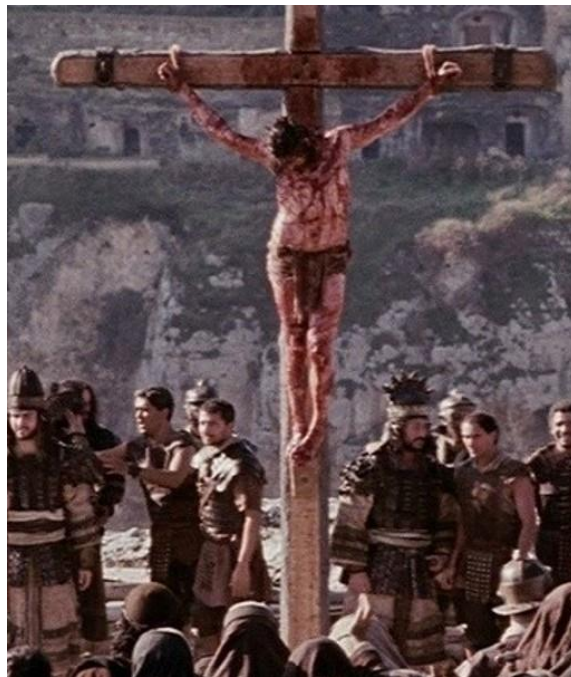
But I am that I am created space and time, is outside of time, and all of time is inside of Him—Him who is the beginning and the end and the way in between. In space and time, it seems that I Am makes judgments about everything. But everything that’s anything in time is the manifestation of the Will of I am that I am from outside of time. Anytime He seems to make a judgment, it’s the manifestation of the Judgment that has always been made. So, what is “the Judgment?” He already told us. Remember?

John 3:19, “This is the Judgment: The Light...” God is Light and Jesus is the Light of the Word, writes John^{xi} (Even physicists tell us that Light is actually eternal—a photon does not experience the passage of time). “This is the judgment: The Light has come into the world and men loved the darkness father than the Light.”

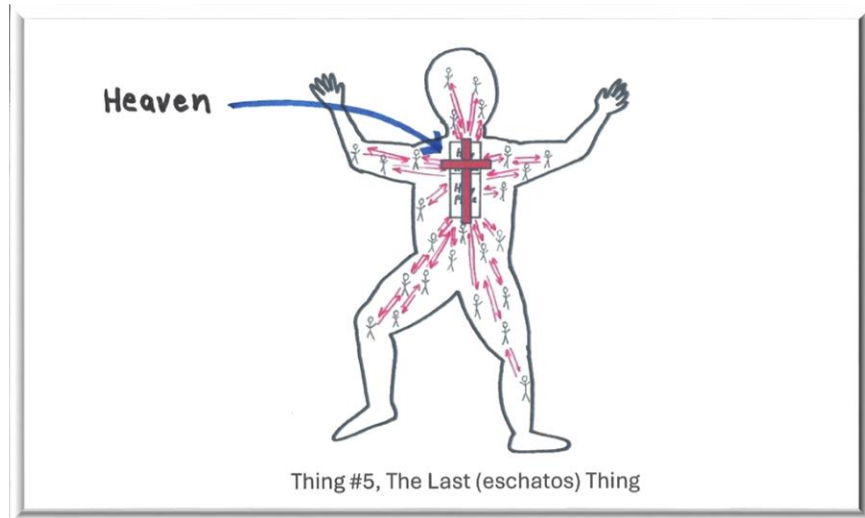
In John 12: 31, Jesus, on Palm Sunday, says, “Now is the Judgement.” (Theologians, Philosophers, and now Physicists tell us that “NOW” is “the moment” in which eternity touches time, and we make judgments, or should I say, The Judgment of God that is God, makes us.) John 12, “Now is the Judgment of this world, now will the ruler of this world be cast out, and I when I am lifted up from the earth will draw all people to myself,” and “He said this to show by what kind of death he was going to die” adds John. It would be on a tree in a garden at the end of the 6th day and the edge of the eternal 7th day—The Day of the Judgment of God, the Day of Eternal Life.^{xii} John 12:50, “I know that the Father’s Commandment is Eternal Life,” said Jesus.



So, this is the Judgment—The fruit on this tree in the Garden at the beginning and in the Sanctuary of your own soul.



And this is the Judgment—this man hanging on this tree called a cross on the holy mountain, where we took his life and he gave his life.

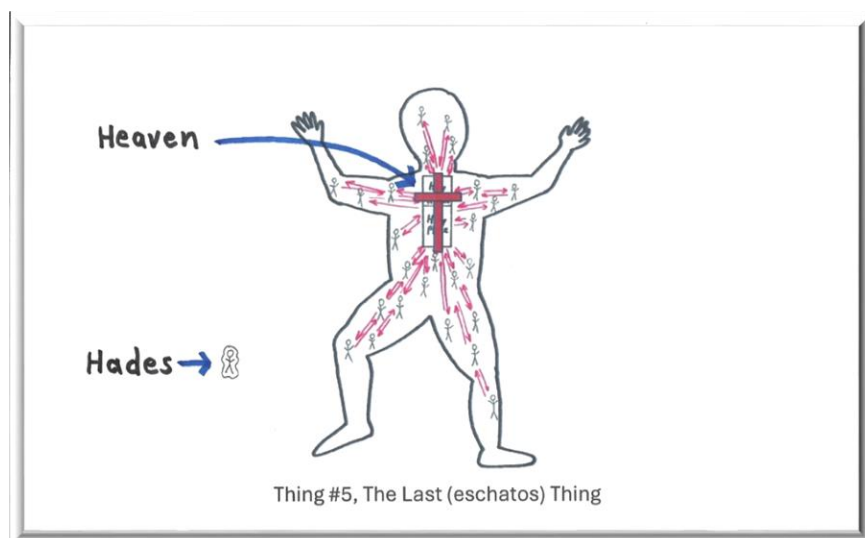


And this is the Judgment—The New Jerusalem coming down, which is His Temple, His bride, and His body rising from the dead, as we each become who it is that we truly are, the incarnation of Love. The judgment is Love, Jesus is the incarnation of Love, and you are his body. The judgment is Adam in the image and likeness of God.

John 5:24:

Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever hears [is hearing] my word [logos] and believes [is believing] him who sent me has eternal life. He does not come into judgment [*krisis*] but has passed from death to [the] Life.

What is the Life? Jesus is the life, eternal life. In Him is Heaven.



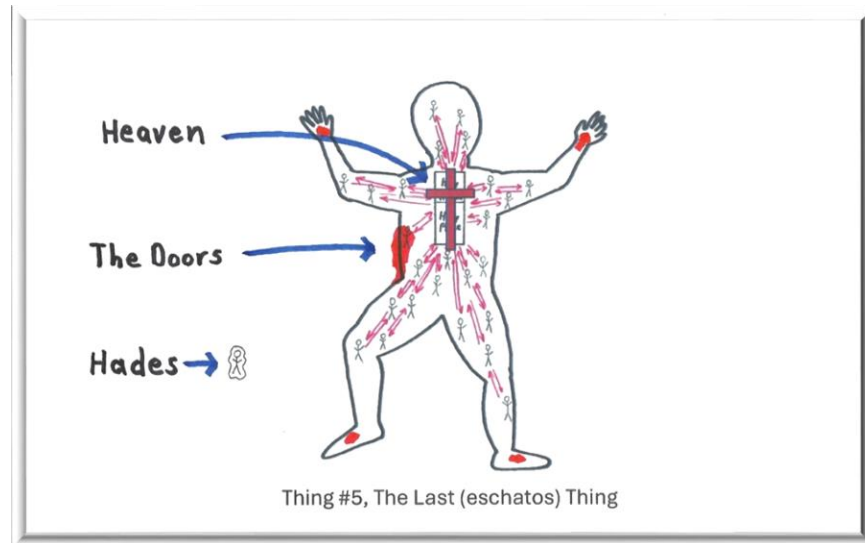
And what is death? It is to be separated from him. That's Hell. And that is our judgment: we separated ourselves from Him in fig leaves, shame and fear, and HE drove us from the garden. But He did not separate Himself from us, for He came with us and even in us as a seed: a breath

that is germinated by a word and fills our temples of stone turning death into life. If you believe, you thereby confess that you were dead. And if you don't believe, you are dead and trapped in Hades for dead things can't do anything until something is done to them.

John 5:25:

“Truly, truly, I say to you, an hour is coming, and is now here, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear [That is “the dead”] will live.

That's God's Judgment: The dead will live. It's the 2nd time he's said it. Our judgment is death, and God's Judgment is the death of death, which is eternal Life. Remember?



- We enter Life through the wounds on the body of Christ which are the doors.
- We must all die with him and rise with him and live his eternal life.
- We must each lose ourselves and find ourselves in him the Body of Life.
- We will love as we have been loved, and this sacrificial communion of love is life.

John 5:25-27:

“Truly, truly, I say to you, an hour is coming, and is now here, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear [That is “the dead”] will live. ²⁶ For as the Father has life in himself, so he has granted the Son also to have life in himself. ²⁷ And he has given him authority [*ek+ousia*= “out of beingness”] to execute [*poiein*: to do] judgment [*krisis*], because he is the Son of Man.

- He is literally the good judgment born out of all our bad judgments.
- He is “The Son of Man.” God is his Father, and we, man, are his mother.
- He is the Faith in our faithlessness, Hope in our hopelessness, Love in our apathy
- He is the Righteousness in our unrighteousness...
- He is Grace where sin did once abound.

- He is the Promised Seed that crushes the head of the serpent, the father of lies.

John 5:28-29:

Do not marvel at this, for an hour is coming when all who are in the tombs will hear his voice ²⁹ and come out, those who have done [*poiein*] good to the resurrection of life, [They do not enter into judgment, for they've already been judged, and so their souls are already alive.] and those who have ~~done~~ [*prasso*: practiced] evil to the resurrection of judgment [*krisis* NOT *katakrisis*: judgment against, damnation].

And what is the Judgment? He's just preached it; it's the Gospel that is Himself, the Word of God that is God, who makes the dead live. It's the death of death which is Eternal Life! John 5:29 is perhaps the most hopeful verse in all the Bible. Nobody gets away with anything: we must all die with Christ. And nobody misses out on anything: we must all live in Christ with God. And nobody is exactly like anyone else, for God is writing the story of His Mercy into the unique disobedience of each one of his children. Some get healed at the pool of Bethesda, some get healed somewhere else. Some return from the far country and join the party now, some weep and gnash their teeth in outer darkness for a time. But in the End, who is the Beginning, and the Way in between, all sin is transformed into Grace, and nothing could be better than it is, as all creation worships God the Father and God the Son for his judgement is Relentless Love.

It's the most hopeful verse, and yet when the translators of the King James Version, translating under the authority of King James, translated the last word of John 5:29 they just changed the word Judgment into Damnation. And institutions like the National Association of Evangelicals, Denver Seminary, and The Evangelical Presbyterian Church, who are entirely capable of reading the Greek, have not corrected this obvious mistranslation, but instead, have required conscription to a mistake at best, and a lie at worst. And so, you have to ask this question, "Why would we do such a thing?" And then answer, "Perhaps we are the monsters? Maybe God isn't two, but one?"

"Hear oh Israel the Lord our God is one" That's the command: HEAR "And you will love the Lord your God with all your heart mind soul and strength, and you will love your neighbor as yourself" That's the promise: THE GOSPEL "Maybe God isn't two but one. And maybe each one of us is not one but two?" A false self that we think we have created, for we have believed The Father of Lies. He is not a father of real people but false people. We are false selves and a true self, that God has created and is still creating, God our Father.

And so, this is the Judgment (the communion table): We did our worst and God revealed the best. We thought he was two, and he revealed that no matter how divided and evil we may become, He remains One. He is what he wills and what he does, the judgment of unconditional Love.

Communion

And so, on the night he was betrayed by all of us, he took bread and broke it saying this is my body given to you.

And he took the cup saying this is the covenant in my blood.

Benediction

When we come to this table we confess our sin: we took his life. And we believe his Mercy: He constantly gives his life. And so, the old man is crucified, and the new man is liberated from his prison. We become who it is that we truly are—the incarnation of Love. We enter His rest—the Sabbath Rest of God—and then we pick up our bed and walk; all change begins with resting in the Love of God.

That man, who as a boy, watched his drunken father threaten to kill his entire family, was my dad—the most Christlike man I’ve ever known. He loved his dad, but he didn’t remain in the prison that fear had created. By the Grace of God, he came to believe, that he had another Father.

This is the Judgment of God your Father. Never run from his judgment; always run to his judgment, even if it burns. Dark cups are wine, Light cups are juice and “in this is Love.”

Endnotes

ⁱ Matthew 27:18, Mark 7:22

ⁱⁱ You know what makes Hitler truly terrifying? It’s not that he was an inhuman monster (Google “Hitler playing with his dogs” and watch the video)... It’s not that he was an inhuman monster, but that he was a human monster... perhaps a bit like you or your Dad.

ⁱⁱⁱ The Laundry List – 14 Traits of an Adult Child of an Alcoholic

1. We became isolated and afraid of people and authority figures.
 2. We became approval seekers and lost our identity in the process.
 3. We are frightened by angry people and any personal criticism.
 4. We either become alcoholics, marry them or both, or find another compulsive personality such as a workaholic to fulfill our sick abandonment needs.
 5. We live life from the viewpoint of victims and we are attracted by that weakness in our love and friendship relationships.
 6. We have an overdeveloped sense of responsibility and it is easier for us to be concerned with others rather than ourselves; this enables us not to look too closely at our own faults, etc.
 7. We get guilt feelings when we stand up for ourselves instead of giving in to others.
 8. We became addicted to excitement.
 9. We confuse love and pity and tend to "love" people we can "pity" and "rescue."
 10. We have "stuffed" our feelings from our traumatic childhoods and have lost the ability to feel or express our feelings because it hurts so much (Denial).
 11. We judge ourselves harshly and have a very low sense of self-esteem.
 12. We are dependent personalities who are terrified of abandonment and will do anything to hold on to a relationship in order not to experience painful abandonment feelings, which we received from living with sick people who were never there emotionally for us.
 13. Alcoholism is a family disease; and we became para-alcoholics and took on the characteristics of that disease even though we did not pick up the drink.
 14. Para-alcoholics are reactors rather than actors.
- <https://adultchildren.org/literature/laundry-list/>

^{iv} Hebrews 12:5-11

^v “Beware when fighting the dragon lest you become the dragon” – Nietzsche

^{vi} The Nicene creed states that Jesus is “begotten, not made.” This is how the early fathers began to formulate the doctrine of the Trinity. They are attempting to say that Jesus didn’t simply come into existence as if he had not always existed, for Scripture informs us that he did and he has “equality with God.” And yet Scripture (John in particular) makes it clear that he is “the begotten (only begotten);” he was born of a Virgin; he is the created uncreated.

Which raises all sorts of fascinating questions about us, for we are his body, and he is in us, and we were made with the uncreated breath of the Creator and created dust (Adamah). John tells us that we “will be like him.” And Jesus told us that God is “our father,” his and ours. We are also begotten and yet there is an “only begotten.”

^{vii} The translators have left out the definite article as if they think it’s unreasonable to suggest that there is only one Judgment... like Love.

^{viii}

^{ix} Ecclesiastes 12:7

^x Psalm 51:4, Romans 3:4, Psalm 145:17

^{xi} 1 John 1:5, John 8:12, 9:5

^{xii} So we have come to know and to believe the love that God has for us. God is love, and whoever abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him. By this is love perfected with us, so that we may have confidence for the day of judgment, because as he is so also are we in this world. There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear. For fear has to do with punishment, and whoever fears has not been perfected in love. We love because he first loved us. – 1 John 4:16-19