STUDY BIBLE WORKBOOK

John 5

The Authority of the Son

QUICK STUDY + DEEP DIVE

Jesus heals at Bethesda and reveals the Son’s divine authority to give life, judge, and receive equal honor. His works, the Father, John the Baptist, and the Scriptures bear witness to Him.

Scripture quotations: World English Bible (WEB)

HOW TO USE THIS WORKBOOK

Quick Study: Begin with the overview, chapter movements, Bible words, Greek pronunciation notes, Gospel Connection, and a guided prayer.

Deep Dive: Nine Scripture-first SOAP passages include all 47 WEB verses, substantial observation, application, and prayer.

WESTERN GRACE MEDIA

John 5 — Geographic Setting

Jesus is in Jerusalem at a festival. The regional map shows the city in Judea and the surrounding historical territories. The main event takes place at the Pool of Bethesda near the Sheep Gate.



Original WGM atlas; Jerusalem marked. Biblical regions and historical boundaries are approximate.

Regional location



COUNTRIES IN YEAR 2020

Jerusalem (5:1–2): Jesus arrives for an unnamed Jewish festival; the healing takes place here.

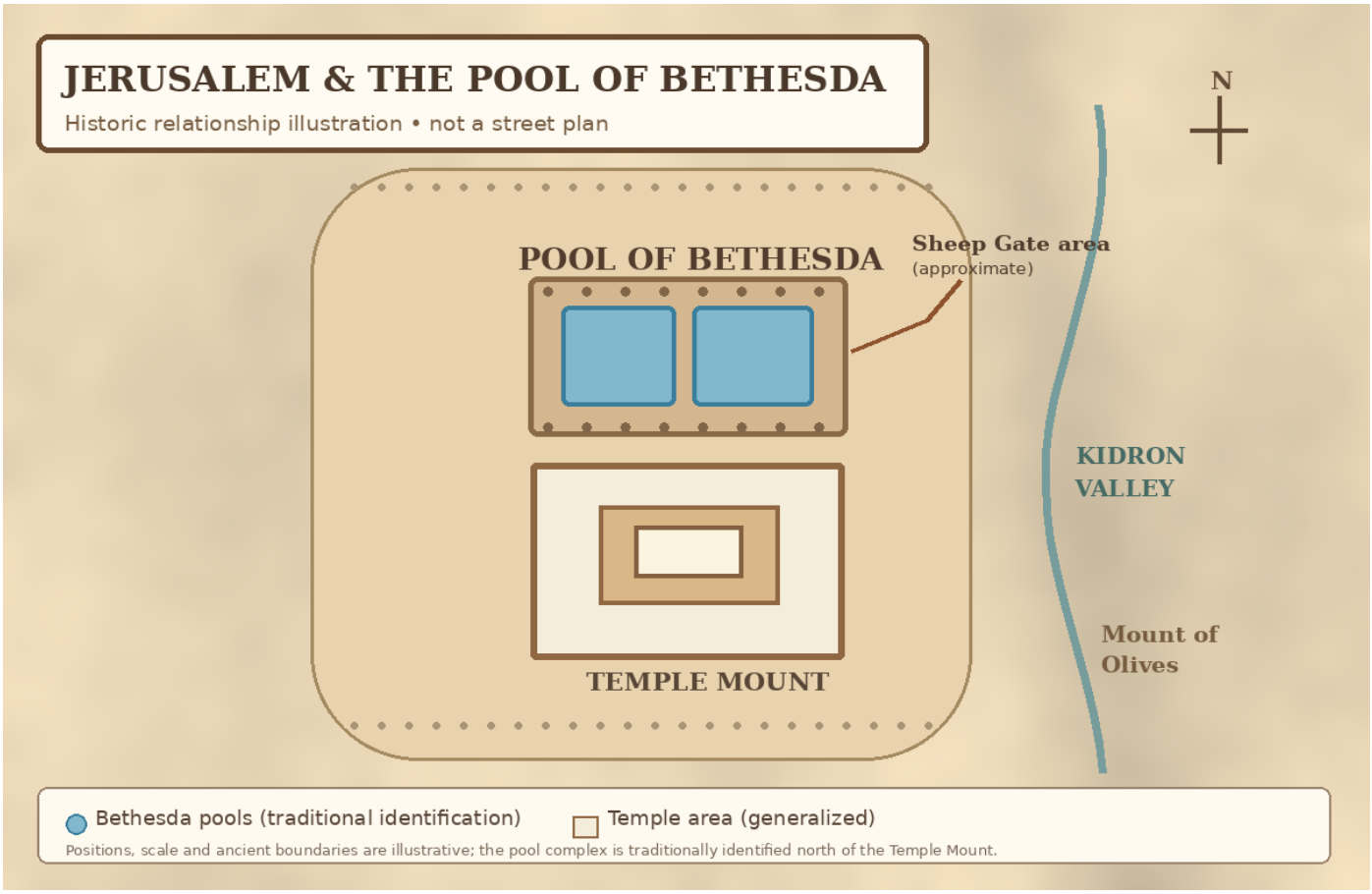
Pool of Bethesda: Described near the Sheep Gate, with five porches. A pool complex north of the Temple Mount is the traditional identification.

Temple area (5:14): Jesus later finds the man in the temple precincts.

Reading the atlas: First-century territories and borders are approximate. Relief shows hills; blue shows seas and rivers. The red marker identifies Jerusalem, not an exact street or healing location.

Jerusalem: The Pool of Bethesda

A closer visual guide to John 5:1–15. The Pool of Bethesda is traditionally identified in the area north of the Temple Mount; no precise first-century gate positions or travel routes are asserted.



HOW TO READ THE CITY CONTEXT

Pool of Bethesda

The surviving archaeological pool complex is commonly associated with the location described in John 5:2. Its two basins help explain the five-portico description.

Sheep Gate and the Temple

John places the pool near the Sheep Gate, and Jesus later meets the healed man in the temple. The sketch shows relationships, not surveyed street coordinates.

The manuscript note

WEB Classic includes the stirred-water explanation in John 5:3b–4, but many early Greek manuscripts omit it; the chapter discusses this openly.

My observations about the setting:

John 5 — The Authority of the Son

MAIN VERSE

John 5:24, WEB: “Most certainly I tell you, he who hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life, and doesn’t come into judgment, but has passed out of death into life.

BIG PICTURE

At Jerusalem Jesus restores a man disabled for thirty-eight years. The Sabbath controversy leads to His teaching about the Father and Son: the Son gives life, has authority to judge, and deserves the honor given to the Father. Jesus promises eternal life now to believers and a future resurrection. He names witnesses who confirm His identity and urges readers to come to Him for life.

Healing at Bethesda (5:1–9)

Jesus heals a man who has suffered thirty-eight years and tells him to rise and walk.

The Sabbath controversy (5:10–15)

Religious authorities question the healed man about carrying his mat on the Sabbath.

Jesus’ divine claim (5:16–18)

Jesus identifies the Father’s ongoing work as the pattern for His own.

The Son’s authority (5:19–23)

The Son gives life, judges, and receives the honor due to the Father.

QUICK STUDY NOTES

The Chapter’s Major Movements

Life now and resurrection later (5:24–29)
Faith brings eternal life now, and the Son will summon the dead to resurrection.

Witnesses to Jesus (5:30–38)
John the Baptist, Jesus’ works, and the Father testify about Him.

Scripture and the heart (5:39–44)
The Scriptures testify to Christ; pursuit of human praise can block faith.

Moses points to Christ (5:45–47)
The writings of Moses bear witness to Jesus.

QUICK STUDY FLOW

At Bethesda, Jesus heals by His Word
↓
A Sabbath dispute begins
↓
The Son explains His unity with the Father
↓
Jesus promises life and future resurrection
↓
John, the works, and the Father bear witness
↓
The Scriptures testify about Jesus
↓
Moses’ writings call readers to believe Him

QUICK STUDY NOTES

Important Bible Words

Word / Phrase	Simple Meaning	Why It Matters
Bethesda	A Jerusalem pool near the Sheep Gate; name also appears as Bethzatha in manuscripts	Site of the healing that begins John 5.
Sabbath	Weekly day of rest under Israel's covenant law	The Sabbath dispute brings Jesus' divine authority into focus.
Son of God	Jesus' unique relationship to God the Father	The chapter describes His life-giving works and rightful honor.
Equal with God	John's explanation of the force of Jesus' claim in 5:18	Jesus is not presented as merely another prophet.
Eternal life	Life given by the Son to the person who believes	Jesus says the believer has it now (5:24).
Resurrection	The raising of the dead	Jesus promises a future bodily resurrection and judgment.
Witness / Testimony	Evidence or testimony supporting a truth claim	John, Jesus' works, the Father, and Scripture point to Christ.
Moses' writings	The Law / first five books of Scripture	Jesus says that Moses wrote about Him.

Which of these words is most important to me in John 5, and why?

Translation Word Notes

Pronunciations are approximate classroom-style Biblical Greek. CAPITAL letters show the stressed syllable. Greek helps clarify meaning but is not required for understanding Scripture. NKJV/NIV/NLT phrases are brief comparisons; full Scripture quotations remain WEB.

Verse	Greek & pronunciation	NKJV	NIV	NLT	Meaning in context
5:2	kolymbēthra koh-loom-BAY-thrah	pool	pool	pool	The pool near the Sheep Gate is the setting for the sign; Bethesda and Bethzatha are textual name variants.
5:6	hygiēs hoo-gee-AYS	made well	get well	get well	Jesus addresses the man’s need with an invitation to be restored.
5:17	ergazomai er-GAH-zoh-my	working	at work	working	Jesus relates His action to the Father’s ongoing work.
5:18	isos EE-sohs	equal with God	equal with God	equal with God	John reports the perceived significance of Jesus calling God His Father.
5:21	zōopoieō zoh-oh-poy-EH-oh	gives life	gives life	gives life	The Son gives life as the Father does.
5:24	metabebēken meh-tah-BEH-bay-ken	passed from	crossed over	passed from	The believer has passed from death into life.
5:29	anastasis ah-NAH-stah-sis	resurrection	rise	resurrection	Jesus teaches resurrection to life and to judgment.
5:39	eraunate eh-rah-OO-nah-teh	search	study	search	The Greek form may be read as a statement or command; context matters.

Word-study notes:

The Gospel Connection

The center of John 5 is not merely an astonishing healing. Jesus reveals that the Father has entrusted life and judgment to the Son. He promises eternal life now to those who hear His word and believe the Father who sent Him (5:24), and He will one day raise the dead (5:28–29). The miracle demonstrates His authority; the Father, His works, John the Baptist, and the Scriptures bear witness to His identity. Salvation comes not through ritual, knowledge, or applause, but through faith in Jesus Christ, who would give His life and rise again for sinners (John 19–20).

Reflection: Am I receiving life through Christ, or trying to secure it through my own efforts?

A Short Prayer from John 5

Father, thank You for sending Your Son, who has authority over life and death. Forgive me for trusting my efforts or reputation more than Your Word. Help me receive Jesus by faith, honor Him as Lord, and read Scripture with a heart ready to obey. In Jesus' name, amen.

Pray this in your own words:

QUICK STUDY COMPLETE

One Truth to Carry With You

The Son has the Father's authority to give life and judge, and the Scriptures call me to believe Him.

READY TO GO DEEPER — NEXT PAGE

Ready to Go Deeper?

This Deep Dive follows S.O.A.P.: Scripture, Observation, Application, and Prayer. Begin with the complete WEB passage. Let the text set the terms of our study, then consider the explanation, respond personally, and pray.

S — Scripture

Read every verse slowly; note changes in speaker, setting, and what Jesus reveals about Himself.

O — Observation

What does John teach about the Son, the Father, eternal life, judgment, faith, and testimony?

A — Application

What should I believe, confess, obey, trust, or share in response to the passage?

P — Prayer

Pray from the passage’s truth rather than from imagined details about the characters.

Before I begin, what do I want God to teach me from John 5?

Questions and repeated words to watch for:

JOHN 5:1–9

The Man at Bethesda

S — Scripture

1 After these things, there was a feast of the Jews, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem.
2 Now in Jerusalem by the sheep gate, there is a pool, which is called in Hebrew, “Bethesda”, having five porches.
3 In these lay a great multitude of those who were sick, blind, lame, or paralyzed, waiting for the moving of the water;
4 for an angel went down at certain times into the pool and stirred up the water. Whoever stepped in first after the stirring of the water was healed of whatever disease he had.
5 A certain man was there who had been sick for thirty-eight years.
6 When Jesus saw him lying there, and knew that he had been sick for a long time, he asked him, “Do you want to be made well?”
7 The sick man answered him, “Sir, I have no one to put me into the pool when the water is stirred up, but while I’m coming, another steps down before me.”
8 Jesus said to him, “Arise, take up your mat, and walk.”
9 Immediately, the man was made well, and took up his mat and walked. Now that day was a Sabbath.

John 5:1–9, WEB

O — Observation

What does the passage reveal about Jesus, God, people, worship, faith, or the gospel?

Jesus goes to Jerusalem for an unnamed festival and meets a man who has suffered for thirty-eight years. The pool near the Sheep Gate had five covered porches. The man focuses on his inability to reach the water; Jesus directly asks whether he wants to be made well and commands him to rise.

John emphasizes Jesus’ authority: the man is immediately healed by His word, not by a ritual or an advantage over other sick people. The healing happens on the Sabbath, introducing the dispute that follows.

The WEB includes an explanation in 5:3b–4 about the stirred water and an angel; many early Greek manuscripts omit that explanation. The healing itself in 5:5–9 is not dependent on the disputed wording.

My observations:

A — Application

Where do I limit my expectations of Jesus to what I can personally arrange or control?

P — Prayer

Lord Jesus, help me listen to Your Word rather than placing my hope in my own ability to manage outcomes.

Pray this in your own words:

JOHN 5:10–15

The Sabbath Dispute

S — Scripture

10 So the Jews said to him who was cured, “It is the Sabbath. It is not lawful for you to carry the mat.”
11 He answered them, “He who made me well said to me, ‘Take up your mat and walk.’ ”
12 Then they asked him, “Who is the man who said to you, ‘Take up your mat and walk’?”
13 But he who was healed didn’t know who it was, for Jesus had withdrawn, a crowd being in the place.
14 Afterward Jesus found him in the temple and said to him, “Behold, you are made well. Sin no more, so that nothing worse happens to you.”
15 The man went away, and told the Jews that it was Jesus who had made him well.

John 5:10–15, WEB

O — Observation

What does the passage reveal about Jesus, God, people, worship, faith, or the gospel?

Some authorities object when they see the healed man carrying his mat on the Sabbath. Their question concerns a Sabbath prohibition, but the narrative directs readers to the Person who healed him.

Jesus later finds the man in the temple and tells him not to continue in sin. The text does not say that his thirty-eight years of illness were caused by a particular sin, and we should not assume that suffering always results from personal wrongdoing.

John records that the man identifies Jesus to the authorities. The narrative does not fully explain his motives, so interpreting him as a deliberate betrayer goes beyond what John states.

My observations:

A — Application

Am I more concerned with defending my habits than recognizing what Jesus is teaching?

P — Prayer

Father, give me a heart that honors Your Word and responds humbly when Christ confronts sin.

Pray this in your own words:

JOHN 5:16–18

The Son and the Father

S — Scripture

16 For this cause the Jews persecuted Jesus and sought to kill him, because he did these things on the Sabbath.
17 But Jesus answered them, “My Father is still working, so I am working, too.”
18 For this cause therefore the Jews sought all the more to kill him, because he not only broke the Sabbath, but also called God his own Father, making himself equal with God.

John 5:16–18, WEB

O — Observation

What does the passage reveal about Jesus, God, people, worship, faith, or the gospel?

John connects the mounting opposition to Jesus’ actions on the Sabbath. Jesus responds that His Father is still working and that He, too, is working.

His opponents understand His claim to God as His own Father as a claim to equality with God. John does not soften Jesus into merely another religious teacher; the rest of the chapter develops His unique divine authority.

The passage must be read alongside Jesus’ complete teaching about His relationship with the Father rather than as an isolated accusation.

My observations:

A — Application

Do I receive Jesus as the divine Son, or try to reduce His claims to something more comfortable?

P — Prayer

Jesus, give me reverence for Your true identity and courage to follow Your teaching even when it challenges me.

Pray this in your own words:

JOHN 5:19–23

The Son Gives Life and Judgment

S — Scripture

19 Jesus therefore answered them, “Most certainly, I tell you, the Son can do nothing of himself, but
what he sees the Father doing. For whatever things he does, these the Son also does likewise.
20 For the Father has affection for the Son, and shows him all things that he himself does. He will show
him greater works than these, that you may marvel.
21 For as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, even so the Son also gives life to whom he
desires.
22 For the Father judges no one, but he has given all judgment to the Son,
23 that all may honor the Son, even as they honor the Father. He who doesn’t honor the Son doesn’t
honor the Father who sent him.

John 5:19–23, WEB

O — Observation

What does the passage reveal about Jesus, God, people, worship, faith, or the gospel?

The Son does not act independently or in rivalry against the Father. He perfectly does what He sees the Father doing. The language of unity and love shows a unique relationship, not a denial of His deity.

Jesus claims authority to give life and to exercise judgment—acts associated with God Himself. The Father wills that people honor the Son just as they honor the Father.

In traditional Trinitarian theology, the Father and the Son are personally distinct yet one in divine nature. This passage reveals a unity of purpose and action that calls for worship and faith.

My observations:

A — Application

Does my worship and obedience give the Son the honor that belongs to Him?

P — Prayer

Father, thank You for revealing Yourself through Your Son. Teach me to honor Jesus as You command.

Pray this in your own words:

JOHN 5:24–29

From Death into Life

S — Scripture

24 “Most certainly I tell you, he who hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life, and
doesn’t come into judgment, but has passed out of death into life.
25 Most certainly I tell you, the hour comes, and now is, when the dead will hear the Son of God’s voice;
and those who hear will live.
26 For as the Father has life in himself, even so he gave to the Son also to have life in himself.
27 He also gave him authority to execute judgment, because he is a son of man.
28 Don’t marvel at this, for the hour comes in which all who are in the tombs will hear his voice
29 and will come out; those who have done good, to the resurrection of life; and those who have done
evil, to the resurrection of judgment.

John 5:24–29, WEB

O — Observation

What does the passage reveal about Jesus, God, people, worship, faith, or the gospel?

Jesus promises that the one who hears His Word and believes the Father who sent Him has eternal life now and has passed from death into life. Saving faith rests on Christ and His promise, not religious performance.

He also speaks of a future hour when all in the tombs will hear His voice and rise to either life or judgment. Christians may explain the timing of prophetic events differently, but Jesus clearly teaches a real resurrection and accountability before God.

Good and evil actions reveal a life’s orientation; this should not overturn John’s repeated teaching that eternal life is received through faith in the Son (3:16; 5:24).

My observations:

A — Application

Am I resting in Christ’s promise of life, and am I living as someone who belongs to Him?

P — Prayer

Lord, thank You for the sure promise of life in Christ. Shape my daily conduct to reflect the faith I profess.

Pray this in your own words:

JOHN 5:30–35

A Righteous Judgment and John’s Witness

S — Scripture

30 I can of myself do nothing. As I hear, I judge; and my judgment is righteous, because I don’t seek my own will, but the will of my Father who sent me.
31 “If I testify about myself, my witness is not valid.
32 It is another who testifies about me. I know that the testimony which he testifies about me is true.
33 You have sent to John, and he has testified to the truth.
34 But the testimony which I receive is not from man. However, I say these things that you may be saved.
35 He was the burning and shining lamp, and you were willing to rejoice for a while in his light.

John 5:30–35, WEB

O — Observation

What does the passage reveal about Jesus, God, people, worship, faith, or the gospel?

Jesus’ judgment agrees perfectly with the Father’s will. He is not seeking an independent reputation but carrying out the mission of the One who sent Him.

Jesus points to testimony about His identity, including John the Baptist, whose witness the people had heard. The Baptist is a lamp that shines; he is not the final light.

The issue is not a lack of opportunity to hear testimony. John’s warning invites us to respond to what God has made known rather than enjoy religious interest without trusting Christ.

My observations:

A — Application

Do I treat Christian testimony as interesting information, or as an invitation to believe Jesus?

P — Prayer

Father, thank You for faithful witnesses. Lead me beyond admiration of them to trust in Your Son.

Pray this in your own words:

JOHN 5:36–38

The Works and the Father Testify

S — Scripture

36 But the testimony which I have is greater than that of John; for the works which the Father gave me to accomplish, the very works that I do, testify about me, that the Father has sent me.
37 The Father himself, who sent me, has testified about me. You have neither heard his voice at any time, nor seen his form.
38 You don’t have his word living in you, because you don’t believe him whom he sent.

John 5:36–38, WEB

O — Observation

What does the passage reveal about Jesus, God, people, worship, faith, or the gospel?

Jesus’ works are evidence that the Father has sent Him. His signs do not exist merely to impress observers; they bear witness to His authority and mission.

The Father Himself testifies of the Son, and Jesus exposes the problem of unbelief: His opponents do not have God’s Word abiding in them because they reject the One He sent.

Scripture and the signs are not competing authorities. Both are meant to lead us to Christ, who fulfills the Father’s saving purpose.

My observations:

A — Application

Will I receive the testimony God has given about Jesus even when it challenges my expectations?

P — Prayer

Lord God, open my heart to hear Your Word and recognize Your Son through the testimony You have given.

Pray this in your own words:

JOHN 5:39–44

Scripture Points to Christ

S — Scripture

39 “You search the Scriptures, because you think that in them you have eternal life; and these are they which testify about me.
40 Yet you will not come to me, that you may have life.
41 I don’t receive glory from men.
42 But I know you, that you don’t have God’s love in yourselves.
43 I have come in my Father’s name, and you don’t receive me. If another comes in his own name, you will receive him.
44 How can you believe, who receive glory from one another, and you don’t seek the glory that comes from the only God?

John 5:39–44, WEB

O — Observation

What does the passage reveal about Jesus, God, people, worship, faith, or the gospel?

Jesus says that the Scriptures themselves testify about Him. Careful Bible reading matters, yet knowledge about the text must lead to the Savior to whom it points.

He rebukes the search for praise from people instead of the glory that comes from God. Religious expertise and social approval cannot substitute for genuine love of God and faith in Christ.

This is a warning to any reader, including us; it is not a claim that all Jewish people rejected Jesus. Jesus, His disciples, and the witnesses in this account are Jewish.

My observations:

A — Application

Am I reading Scripture to encounter and obey Jesus, or mainly to win arguments and approval?

P — Prayer

Lord, keep my Bible study humble and Christ-centered. Turn me from pride and make Your truth fruitful in me.

Pray this in your own words:

JOHN 5:45–47

Moses Wrote About Me

S — Scripture

45 “Don’t think that I will accuse you to the Father. There is one who accuses you, even Moses, on whom
you have set your hope.
46 For if you believed Moses, you would believe me; for he wrote about me.
47 But if you don’t believe his writings, how will you believe my words?”

John 5:45–47, WEB

O — Observation

What does the passage reveal about Jesus, God, people, worship, faith, or the gospel?

Jesus concludes by saying that Moses’ writings testify about Him. His opponents claim confidence in Moses while refusing to believe the One of whom Moses wrote.

Jesus’ words point to the unity of Scripture: the Old Testament prepares the way for Christ, and the Gospel reveals Him. We should interpret individual passages carefully rather than claim every detail is a hidden prediction.

Faithful evangelical reading honors the historical meaning of Moses’ writings while recognizing the larger biblical story that leads to Jesus.

My observations:

A — Application

When I read the Old Testament, do I ask how it contributes to the Bible’s message fulfilled in Christ?

P — Prayer

Father, teach me to read both Testaments with faithfulness, humility, and confidence in Jesus.

Pray this in your own words:

Hard Questions

Why is John 5:4 missing from some Bibles?

The WEB Classic prints the explanation about an angel stirring the water, but many early Greek manuscripts do not contain part of 5:3 or any of 5:4. The manuscript difference is acknowledged in a WEB footnote. The certain point of the narrative is that Jesus heals the man by His word. The disputed explanation must not be turned into a promise that God heals people through a particular pool.

Which Jewish feast brought Jesus to Jerusalem?

John 5:1 does not name the festival. Proposals include Passover, Pentecost, and other feasts, but we cannot choose one as a fact from the text.

Did Jesus break God’s Sabbath command?

John records a controversy over Sabbath practice and Jesus’ claim about the Father’s work. Evangelicals differ on details of the legal discussion, but the passage does not present Jesus as a sinner. John’s central point is His divine authority and the response it provokes.

Was the man disabled because he sinned?

Jesus warns him to sin no more (5:14), but John does not identify the cause of his thirty-eight years of illness. John 9:1–3 also warns us not to assume that physical suffering is always punishment for a particular personal sin.

How can Jesus be equal with God yet say He can do nothing of Himself?

Jesus is not claiming weakness or an inability to act; He describes perfect harmony with the Father. Historic Protestant teaching confesses the Father and Son as distinct persons sharing the one divine nature. Jesus’ authority to give life, judge, and receive equal honor is stated explicitly.

Does John 5:29 teach that good deeds earn salvation?

Jesus speaks of resurrection to life and to judgment, while John 5:24 says eternal life is received by hearing and believing. Deeds matter as evidence of a life’s response to God; they do not replace faith in Christ as the means of receiving salvation.

Does 5:39 mean Bible study is unnecessary?

No. Jesus criticizes reading Scripture while refusing the Person to whom it bears witness. Careful study is good, but it must lead to trusting and following Him, not merely accumulating information.

My questions and notes:

Reflection

What is one situation where I need to listen to Jesus rather than depend on a familiar routine?

How does John 5 change the way I think about the Son’s relationship with the Father?

Do I truly rest in Jesus’ promise of eternal life through faith (5:24)?

What testimony about Jesus has God placed before me that I have been slow to receive?

When I study the Bible, am I seeking Christ—or approval for what I know?

A Prayer for Faith in the Son

Lord Jesus, You see the suffering I cannot solve and the sin I sometimes excuse. Thank You that Your word carries authority and Your promise of life is trustworthy. Teach me to honor You as the Son of God, to respond to Your truth with humble faith, and to read all of Scripture as a testimony that points me to You. Give me grace to love others while standing faithfully on Your Word. In Your name, amen.

Pray this in your own words:

ONE TRUTH TO CARRY WITH YOU

The Son has the Father’s authority to give life and judge, and the Scriptures call me to believe Him.

Final Notes