

Jn. 5:33-47 (LD 6) "The Greatest Witness"

For the Children: Perhaps one of the reasons I like fish and chips so much is because my parents regularly took us out for fish and chips at one of the best shops in Adelaide. No doubt you can think of plenty of things you do because of the way you have been brought up. However, believing in Jesus is not quite the same. Sure, God has used your parents' teaching and example. But above all, you are one of His children because He chose you, sent His Son to die for you, made sure you received His Word and put His Spirit within you to enable you to accept it. This is how we know that Jesus is the Messiah, God, man and perfectly righteous, who saves us from our sins. **Questions:** What are the 4 "Witnesses" to Jesus in Jn. 5? Where do we find their witness today? What are the 3 things that stopped many of the Jewish leaders from believing in Jesus?

Introduction:

First Point: The Witness to the Christ

- 1) John the Baptist: The Messiah had to come in the Father's Name, not just His own (vss. 30-32). So the Lord cites more than the required "2 or 3 witnesses." He cites the testimony of John the Baptist (vss. 33-35). John's testimony in 1:19-36 and 3:22-36 shows that Jesus is the Messiah, that He is divine, that He is righteous and that He comes to take away the sins of the world. Initially this "lamp" impressed the Jewish leaders, but they turned from John – especially from his words about Jesus.
- 2) Jesus' Works: The Lord Jesus' works were greater than John's. They showed the Father's power, commission and approval. These works could strengthen faith, but not create it. The leaders didn't deny the miracles, they just explained them as arising from Satan's power.
- 3) The Father's Testimony: The Father testified to His Son at His baptism (Mk. 1:1); by "giving" Him the works to do; in the OT; by revealing the truth to John the Baptist; on the Mount of Transfiguration and in raising Jesus from the dead.
- 4) The Witness of the Word: All of the above witnesses are conveyed to us authoritatively in the Scriptures. The whole Bible testifies to the fact that Jesus is the Messiah, who came as God, man and righteous, to deal with our sins. This is the "Gospel" in its broad sense – all the promises, types and fulfillment of the Scriptures. It is foundational to faith in Christ, with the work of the Holy Spirit. The Jews studied the OT, but many did not see this. Some Christians today put undue emphasis on man's testimony – man's arguments from logic, history, philosophy, experience etc. But the Scripture is our starting-point in knowing and defending the faith. For there is no greater Witness than God, and He testified by Word and Spirit.

Second Point: Why Many Reject That Witness

- 1) The Glory of Men: Why is that even men like the Jewish leaders, who studied the OT and claimed to believe it, could fail to understand it? It is, of course, due to man's sin. In order to believe, sinners need God's gracious intervention, the gift of faith according to His electing purposes. But the Lord notes some specific aspects of how sin affected the minds of the leaders and blinded them. One of the key factors is that these men preferred the glory of men to the glory of God – humanism. They only listened to those who promoted man's glory. Jesus came in *God's Name*, and without the glory they expected. They preferred false messiah's who looked to the glory of the Jews (Mt. 24:5).
- 2) No Love of God: Since the leaders did not truly love God, they could not love the Messiah who came in God's Name (v. 42).
- 3) No Acceptance of the Scriptures: Since the whole of Scripture is about the Christ, the leaders were blind to its true meaning – for they had rejected the Christ. They stand accused by Moses, whose writings proclaim the Christ. Conversely, if a sinner's presupposition is that the Bible is NOT the inerrant Word of God, he will reject what it says about Christ. These are basic reasons why people reject the Gospel today – as should be pointed out to them. We should also remember that we don't come to Christ and believe in Him because of our own up-bringing, logic, will etc., but because of the gracious operation of the "Holy Gospel" and the Holy Spirit.

Conclusion: