

INTRODUCTION

1. Please turn in your Bibles this morning to John chapter 5.
2. We are looking section where Jesus responds to the Jew's claims that He broke the Sabbath when He healed a crippled man.
3. His first response to their frivolous claim is that He is equal with God.
4. God is working and so is He.
5. Because He is equal with the Father, He is too busy doing the will of the Father because He says in verse 19, "Truly, truly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of Himself, unless *it is* something He sees the Father doing; for whatever the Father does, these things the Son also does in like manner."
6. Jesus' purpose in coming was to do the Father's will.
7. God sent Jesus Him from heaven to earth for the purpose of redeeming those whom the Father had chosen before the creation of the world.
8. Jesus told His disciples in John 4:34 that His "food [was] to do the will of Him who sent Me and to accomplish His work."

9. In John 6:38, He said, “For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me.”

10. So for Him to say that “My Father is working until now, and I Myself am working” (v.17) or in verse 19, “the Son can do nothing of Himself, unless it is something He sees the Father doing,” is Him saying that He came the fulfill the Father’s will not His own.

11. Every miracle He performed, every person He healed was the Father’s will and work.

12. Every person He forgave and offered eternal life was because this was the will of Him who sent Him.

13. When He prayed in His high priestly prayer in John 17, He said in verse 4, “I glorified You on the earth, having accomplished the work which You have given Me to do.”

14. As Jesus responds to His persecutors in John 5, He gives them a grand reply to their accusations.

15. He works on the Sabbath as any other day because He is God and as God the Father is always working, so is God the Son as well as God the Holy Spirit.

16. He shows them His equality with the Father in verses 20-29 by speaking of His raising the dead and His judgment of sin.

17. Now as we look at verses 30-47, He appeals to witnesses that affirm His deity and equality with God.
18. Read John 5:30-47.
19. As we begin our look at this passage this morning, we see in verse 30 Jesus summarizing His equality with the Father.
20. He says, “I can do nothing on My own initiative. As I hear, I judge; and My judgment is just, because I do not seek My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me.”
21. Contrary to His opponents’ accusations, Jesus did not act on His own initiative, but rather always and only in complete conjunction with the Father (cf. v. 19).
22. Because He was equal with the Father, to accuse Him of any wrong doing was also to accuse the Father as well.
23. But since the immediate context involves His activity as judge (vv. 27–29), He continues verse 30 by warning them that as He hears, He judges and His judgment is just because He does not seek His own will but the will of Him who sent Him.
24. And as a just Judge, He will execute judgment on those who reject and oppose Him.
25. When Jesus says in verse 31, “If I alone testify about Myself, My testimony is not true,” He is not saying His testimony is unreliable but He is appealing to what Moses

wrote in Deuteronomy 17:6 and 19:15 where witnesses were to establish the truthfulness of a matter.¹

26. Deuteronomy 17:6 says, “On the evidence of two witnesses or three witnesses, he who is to die shall be put to death; he shall not be put to death on the evidence of one witness.”
27. In Deuteronomy 19:15 it says, “A single witness shall not rise up against a man on account of any iniquity or any sin which he has committed; on the evidence of two or three witnesses a matter shall be confirmed.”
28. By Jesus referring to these Old Testament passages, He is essentially saying in verse 31 if the burden of evidence to support the tremendous claims he has been making exclusively depends on his own self-attestation, his witness must be false. How could it be otherwise?
29. He has already said in the strongest terms that all he says and does—including therefore his witness—is nothing other than a reflection of his perfect obedience to his Father.
30. He says and does only what the Father wants him to say and do. His witness is therefore *not* simply his own witness; it is the witness of the Father.²

¹John Jr MacArthur, *The MacArthur Study Bible*, electronic ed. (Nashville: Word Pub., 1997, c1997). Jn 5:32.

31. “There is another who testifies of Me,” He says, “and I know that the testimony which He gives about Me is true” (v.32).
32. So the preceding verses have emphasized that ‘the Son can do nothing by himself’ (v. 19; *cf.* v. 30). That is true even when the Son bears witness.³
33. Christ has made the claim to be equal with God. He recognizes that the Jews would not formally accept the claim (witness) of one person [because] Jewish law required two witnesses.
34. [So] in the remaining verses, Christ calls several witnesses to establish validity for His claim: John the Baptist (vss. 33–35), His works (vs. 36), the Father (vss. 37–38), the Scriptures (vss. 39–47).⁴
35. Let’s begin by looking first at verses 33-34 at ***the testimony of John the Baptist.***

²D. A. Carson, *The Gospel According to John* (Leicester, England; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Inter-Varsity Press; W.B. Eerdmans, 1991). 259.

³D. A. Carson, *The Gospel According to John* (Leicester, England; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Inter-Varsity Press; W.B. Eerdmans, 1991). 259.

⁴*KJV Bible Commentary* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1997, c1994). 2089.

I. The Testimony of John the Baptist (vv.33-35)

**A. You Inquired of John and He Gave You the Truth
(v.33)**

The “You” in verse 33 is emphatic. In other words, Jesus is saying, “Wasn’t it you who sent a delegation to John and He testified to the truth concerning Me?”

The whole purpose of John the Baptist’s ministry was to prepare the nation for the Messiah and to identify Him when He came.

In John 1:19-27 when the Jews sent a delegation to John their burning question was “Who are you?” implying are you the Messiah who is to come.

John understood their question because he answers in verse 20 by saying, “I am not the Christ.”

After they went through a series of questions to identify who he was they asked him, “What do you say about yourself?” He said in verse 23, “I am a voice of one crying in the wilderness, ‘Make straight the way of the Lord,’ as Isaiah the prophet said.”

Up to this point John states he is not the Messiah but a voice preparing the way for the Messiah. They then asked “Why then are you baptizing, if you are not the Christ, nor Elijah, nor the Prophet?” (v.25).

John answers in verses 26-27 and testifies about the Messiah to come when he says, “I baptize in water, *but* among you stands One whom you do not know. ²⁷ *It is*

He who comes after me, the thong of whose sandal I am not worthy to untie.”

Verse 29 says that when he saw Jesus the next day he identified Him as “the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!” He continues in verse 30 by saying, “This is He on behalf of whom I said, ‘After me comes a Man who has a higher rank than I, for He existed before me.’”

In verse 34 he says, “I myself have seen, and have testified that this is the Son of God.”

John’s testimony supported Jesus’ claims to be the Messiah.

Since he was generally regarded by the people as a prophet of God (Matt. 21:26; Luke 20:6)—the first one in four centuries—his testimony carried considerable weight.

The authorities acknowledged John’s importance by sending a delegation to hear him. But just like their fathers had rejected the prophets God sent to them (cf. 2 Kings 17:13–14; 2 Chron. 24:19; Jer. 7:25–26; 25:4; 29:19; 44:4–5), they rejected John’s witness.⁵

B. Jesus Did Not Need John’s Testimony (vv.34-35a)

⁵John MacArthur, *The MacArthur New Testament Commentary : John 1-11* (Chicago: Moody Press, 2006). 209.

He says, “But the testimony which I receive is not from man, but I say these things so that you may be saved.”

The testimony Jesus had was from God and He didn’t need any man to testify to His deity but for their sake God sent John “so that you may be saved.”

John was “the lamp that was burning and was shining” (v.35a).

In other words, he was not the light but a reflection of it. Just as a lamp lights the way for people, so John lit the way to Jesus.

C. Jesus Rebukes Them for Not Receiving John’s Testimony (v.35b)

He told them they “were willing to rejoice for a while in his light.”

John MacArthur says they were like “moths to a lamp, the people flocked excitedly to hear John who was the first prophet in nearly four hundred years. Their excitement peaked when he proclaimed the imminent arrival of the long-awaited Messiah (Mark 1:7–8). But his stern call for personal repentance (Matt. 3:1–2), his stinging denunciation of the nation’s hypocrisy (Matt. 3:7; Luke 3:7), and his shocking practice of baptizing Jews (the Jews baptized Gentile proselytes, but regarded fellow Jews as already part of God’s kingdom people, and hence not in need of baptism) alienated

many of the people. Eventually, John's fearless condemnation of Herod Antipas's unlawful marriage (Mark 6:17–18) led to his arrest and execution. The thrill seekers may have rejoiced temporarily in John's ministry, but they missed its purpose—to point out Jesus as the Messiah. They were superficially drawn to John (cf. those similarly drawn to Jesus in 2:23–25), but they lacked genuine repentance. Ultimately, they turned away from the light of truth that John reflected, because they loved the evil deeds of darkness (3:19).⁶

Jesus appeals now to His second witness...

II. The Testimony of His Works (v.36)

Jesus continues in verse 36 by saying, “But the testimony which I have is greater than the testimony of John; for the works which the Father has given Me to accomplish—the very works that I do—testify about Me, that the Father has sent Me.”

The late Bishop J.C. Ryal called attention to five things in connection with our Lord's miracles. “First, their number: They were not a few only, but very many. Second, their greatness: they were not little, but mighty interferences with the ordinary course of nature. Third, their publicity: they were not done in a corner but generally in open day,

⁶John MacArthur, *The MacArthur New Testament Commentary : John 1-11* (Chicago: Moody Press, 2006). 210.

and before many witnesses, and often before enemies. Fourth, their character: they were almost always works of love, mercy and compassion, helpful and beneficial to man, and not merely barren exhibitions of power. Fifth, their direct appeal to man's senses: they were visible, and would bear any examination. The difference between them and the boasted miracles of Rome, on all these points, is striking and conclusive."

More convincing that the greatest prophet's testimony to Christ were the very works that He did.

For example...

A. Jesus' Miracles Prompted Nicodemus to Confess that He had Come from God

He said in John 3:2, "Rabbi, we know that You have come from God as a teacher; for no one can do these signs that You do unless God is with him."

B. The Crowds that Saw His Works Testified that They Pointed to the Messiah

John 7:31 records that "many of the crowd believed in Him; and they were saying, 'When the Christ comes, He will not perform more signs than those which this man has, will He?' "

C. As Much as the Pharisees Hated Jesus They Also Testified to His Works

John 11:47 says “the chief priests and the Pharisees convened a council, and were saying, ‘What are we doing? For this man is performing many signs.’”

D. Jesus Points to His Works as a Confirmation of His Claim to be the Son of God and the Messiah

The gospels record at least three dozen of those miracles, and Jesus performed countless others that Scripture does not record (20:30).

1. Jesus said in John 10:25, Jesus answered them, "I told you, and you do not believe; the works that I do in My Father's name, these testify of Me.
2. He said in John 10:37-38 ³⁷ "If I do not do the works of My Father, do not believe Me; ³⁸ but if I do them, though you do not believe Me, believe the works, so that you may know and understand that the Father is in Me, and I in the Father."
3. He said in John 14:11 "Believe Me that I am in the Father and the Father is in Me; otherwise believe because of the works themselves.
4. When He was asked by John's disciples if He was the Messiah, He said in Matthew 11:4-5 "Go and report to John what you hear and see: ⁵ *the* blind receive sight and *the* lame walk, *the* lepers are

cleansed and *the* deaf hear, *the* dead are raised up,
and *the* poor have the gospel preached to them.

Jesus' works were in perfect harmony with the will of the Father. They testified that the Father sent Him. Not only were His works supernatural; they were also in keeping with God's exact wishes. That's why Jesus now gives...

III. The Testimony of the Father (vv.37-38)

He says, "And the Father who sent Me, He has testified of Me. You have neither heard His voice at any time nor seen His form.³⁸ You do not have His word abiding in you, for you do not believe Him whom He sent."

A. The Gospels Record Two Specific Instances in which the Father Gave Verbal Testimony to the Son

At His baptism and at His transfiguration, when "a voice out of the heavens said, 'This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased' " (Matt. 3:17; 17:5; cf. 2 Peter 1:17).

But Jesus here says that they "have neither heard His voice at any time nor seen His form."

How did the Father testify of Christ in these two verses?

A.W. Pink believes it was "through the prophets during Old Testament times." He says, "The Old

Testament economy was characterized by an invisible God, neither His voice being heard, nor His shape seen.”⁷

But in the Old Testament, “Israel at Sinai supposedly saw his form and heard his voice, and accepted his word through his agent Moses.”⁸

So again, what did Jesus mean when He said that they had “neither heard His voice at any time nor seen His form?”

William MacDonald says this refers to what Jesus says in verse 38: “The unbelieving Jews had **neither heard the voice of God at any time, nor seen His form...**because they did **not have His word abiding in them.** God speaks to men through His Word, the Bible. These Jews had the OT Scriptures, but they did not allow God to speak to them through the Scriptures. Their hearts were hardened, and their ears were dull of hearing.

⁷ A.W. Pink, *An Exposition of the Gospel of John* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 1945, 1975). 279.

⁸ Craig S. Keener and InterVarsity Press, *The IVP Bible Background Commentary : New Testament* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 1993). Jn 5:36.

OT Old Testament

They had never seen God's Form or Person because they did **not believe** on the One whom God had **sent**.”⁹

B. Jesus Here Gives the First of Several Statements Stating that They “Did Not Have His Word Abiding in You.”

In verse 40, He says, “you are unwilling to come to Me.” In verse 42, “you do not have the love of God in yourselves.” In verse 43, He says, “You do not receive Me.” In verse 44, “You do not seek the glory that is from the one and only God.”

When He says in verse 38, “You do not have His word abiding in you,” this explained all the others.

This was the cause of which the other were but the inevitable effects.

If God's Word has no place in man's heart they will not come to Christ, they will not receive Him, they will not love God, and they will not seek the honor that comes from God only.”¹⁰

The Jews refused to listen to Jesus who was God's final revelation to mankind (Heb. 1:2). And, in so doing, they displayed their total ignorance of God,

⁹William MacDonald and Arthur Farstad, *Believer's Bible Commentary : Old and New Testaments* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1997, c1995). Jn 5:37.

¹⁰ A.W. Pink, *An Exposition of the Gospel of John* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 1945, 1975). 279.

since those who reject Jesus cannot know the Father
(cf. 5:23; 8:19; 14:6; 15:23).¹¹

Jesus gives a final witness to His deity in verses 39-47...

IV. The Testimony of Scripture (vv.39-47)

He now says to them, “You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; it is these that testify about Me; ⁴⁰ and you are unwilling to come to Me so that you may have life. ⁴¹ ‘I do not receive glory from men; ⁴² but I know you, that you do not have the love of God in yourselves. ⁴³ ‘I have come in My Father’s name, and you do not receive Me; if another comes in his own name, you will receive him. ⁴⁴ ‘How can you believe, when you receive glory from one another and you do not seek the glory that is from the *one and* only God? ⁴⁵ ‘Do not think that I will accuse you before the Father; the one who accuses you is Moses, in 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 do not believe his writings, how will you believe My words?’”

A. The Old Testament Scriptures Testified of Christ (v.39)

Their search of the Scriptures did not yield to them salvation and the ability to recognize their Messiah because they were unbelieving.

¹¹John MacArthur, *The MacArthur New Testament Commentary* : *John 1-11* (Chicago: Moody Press, 2006). 212.

Merely knowing the facts of Scripture, without fully embracing them in the heart (Josh. 1:8; Pss. 1:2; 119:11, 15, 97) and acting on them, will not bring the blessings of salvation.¹²

They did not realize that the OT Scriptures telling of the coming Messiah were actually telling about Jesus.

Jesus said “the Scriptures...testify about Me.”

He could have had in mind any Old Testament passage or the entire Hebrew Scriptures because all of it spoke of the coming Messiah.

1. In Acts 8 when Philip came upon the Ethiopian eunuch he was reading from Isaiah 53:8 which says, “By oppression and judgment He was taken away; And as for His generation, who considered That He was cut off out of the land of the living For the transgression of my people, to whom the stroke *was due*?” Philip asked him if he understood what he was reading and he said, “Well, how could I, unless someone guides me?” And he invited Philip to come up and sit with him. Verse 45 says that Philip “beginning from this Scripture...preached Jesus to him.”

¹²John MacArthur, *The MacArthur New Testament Commentary* : *John 1-11* (Chicago: Moody Press, 2006). 213.

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2. When Philip found Nathanael, he said in John 1:45, “We have found Him of whom Moses in the Law and *also* the Prophets wrote—Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.”
3. When Jesus was on the road to Emmaus with two of His followers after His crucifixion, Luke 24:27 says, “Then beginning with Moses and with all the prophets, He explained to them the things concerning Himself in all the Scriptures.”
4. Jesus said to the Twelve in Luke 24:44, “These are My words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things which are written about Me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled.”

It is terrible to think that men with the Scriptures in their hands could be so blind. But it was even more inexcusable that after the Lord Jesus spoke to them in this way, they still refused to accept Him.¹³

- B. They were Unwilling to Believe Jesus was the Messiah (vv.40-44)

Jesus said, they were “unwilling to come to Me so that you may have life.”

¹³William MacDonald and Arthur Farstad, *Believer's Bible Commentary : Old and New Testaments* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1997, c1995). Jn 5:39.

No matter how diligent they searched the Scriptures they refused to recognize that Jesus was the Messiah that the Old Testament spoke of regardless of the miracles He did.

Jesus states in verse 41 that He was not like them because He did not “receive glory from men” but they did and Jesus knew them according to verse 42 that they did “not have the love of God in [themselves].” Jesus came in His Father’s name and they “do not receive” Him. If another come in his own name, they will receive him.

Over the centuries there have been many false messiahs (as many as sixty-four according to some Jewish historians [Leon Morris, *The Gospel According to John*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1979), 333 n. 122]).

The first-century Jewish historian Josephus noted an increase in false messiahs in the years leading up to the Jewish revolt against Rome (A.D. 66–70).

Sixty years later another messianic pretender, Simon Bar Kochba, appeared. Even Rabbi Akiba, the most esteemed rabbi of the time, believed Bar Kochba to be the messiah—until his revolt was crushed by the Romans with catastrophic results for the Jewish people.

False messiahs will proliferate as the second coming draws near (Matt. 24:23–24), culminating in the

ultimate false messiah, the Antichrist (2 Thess. 2:3–12).¹⁴

Jesus asked a penetrating question in verse 44, “How can you believe, when you receive glory from one another and you do not seek the glory that is from the *one and only God?*”

In other words, “How can I be glorified as your Lord, when you are seeking glory?”

Those engaged in seeking “glory from one another” do not humble themselves in order to believe in Jesus.

Not to seek the honor and glory that comes from God in Jesus Christ is culpable ignorance that will be severely judged.

Jesus ends His response to them in verse 45-47 by stating that...

C. Moses’ Writings Would Judge Them (vv.45-47)

He says, “Do not think that I will accuse you before the Father; the one who accuses you is Moses, in 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 do not believe his writings, how will you believe My words?’”

¹⁴John MacArthur, *The MacArthur New Testament Commentary* : *John 1-11* (Chicago: Moody Press, 2006). 214.

They ignored the clear evidence that Jesus was the Messiah. In spite of the testimony of John the Baptist, the testimony of Jesus' works, the testimony of the Father, and the testimony of Scripture, they still rejected Him by crucifying Him.

The most heinous act of apostasy in history is the Jews crucified their own Messiah.

Peter said in Acts 2:23, "This *Man*, delivered over by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God, you nailed to a cross by the hands of godless men and put *Him* to death."

CONCLUSION

1. Have you considered the testimony of those who have embraced Jesus?
2. Or are you unwilling to believe like those in this passage?
3. Jesus is equal with God because He is God.
4. How is that proven?
5. Read the Bible.
6. It clearly presents Jesus as God, the Savior of the world, the granter of eternal life, and Judge.
7. One day you will stand before Him either in your sin or forgiven of them.

8. Which will it be today?
9. To reject Jesus is to die in your sin and be left to bear the consequences of your sin through all eternity.
10. But to embrace Christ is to be forgiven of all your sin and to have eternal life with Him.
11. Let's pray.