

John 5:31–40

31 “If I bear witness of Myself, My witness is not true.

32 There is another who bears witness of Me, and I know that the witness which He witnesses of Me is true.

33 You have sent to John, and he has borne witness to the truth.

34 Yet I do not receive testimony from man, but I say these things that you may be saved.

35 He was the burning and shining lamp, and you were willing for a time to rejoice in his light.

36 But I have a greater witness than John’s; for the works which the Father has given Me to finish—the very works that I do—bear witness of Me, that the Father has sent Me.

37 And the Father Himself, who sent Me, has testified of Me. You have neither heard His voice at any time, nor seen His form.

38 But you do not have His word abiding in you, because whom He sent, Him you do not believe.

39 You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me.

40 But you are not willing to come to Me that you may have life.

“Witnesses to the Identity of the Lord Jesus” John 5:31-40

INTRO:

Can you imagine what it must have been like to listen in on this conversation? The Jewish leaders heard the Lord Jesus make His claim that He was co-equal with the Father but not competing with Him. They had to wonder, *“How can He make such claims? Where is the evidence of what He is saying?”*

Jesus proceeded to show the Jews why they needed to believe *“that God was His Father, making Him equal with God”* (v. 18). So, in **verse 31** we read, *“If I bear witness of Myself, My witness is not true.”* Under Jewish law everything had to be established by two or three witnesses. Our Lord here lays the groundwork for the three witnesses He called to testify to His identity. The three witnesses are:

I. Witness One – John the Baptist (v. 33-35)

II. Witness Two – The works that Jesus did (v. 36)

III. Witness Three – God the Father, Himself (v. 32, 37-40)

I. Witness One – John the Baptist (v. 33-35)

A. “You have sent to John, and he has borne witness to the truth. Yet I do not receive testimony from man, but I say these things that you may be saved. He was the burning and shining lamp, and you were willing for a time to rejoice in his light.” (verses 33-35).

What kind of witness did John bear to the person of our Lord Jesus?

B. Here is the first witness to the deity of Jesus Christ. What did John, the Baptist say about Who Jesus is? First, John bore witness to The Truth. What did John say?

1. In chapter one of this Gospel, John told the authorities very clearly that John himself was not the Messiah. Rather, he was the one who came to point out the Messiah to come. John told us that the One coming after him in time, Jesus, was preferred before him because He was of first rank (1:15). This is a clear testimony to the preexistence and deity of the Lord Jesus Christ.

2. John also bore witness to the Father's plan in sending His Son into the world by pointing to Jesus twice as *"the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world"* (1:29 & 36).

C. Second, John bore witness with the light of his life. John was the lamp ignited with the light from God. Jesus said to these Jewish leaders in our text here in **John 5**, that they recognized John's light was Divine. They also knew His ministry was unusually blessed of God. Still these leaders refused to listen to what John had to say.

II. Witness Two – The works that Jesus did (v. 36)

"But I have a greater witness than John's; for the works which the Father has given Me to finish—the very works that I do—bear witness of Me, that the Father has sent Me." (verse 36).

A. What are these works? What testimony do they offer about Who Jesus is? Evidently, the Apostle John believed that the signs [miracles] Jesus did offered eloquent testimony to who Jesus was and is.

1. Our Apostle told us about how turning the water into wine at Cana of Galilee showed forth His glory. He who called creation out of nothing in the beginning could transform water into wine by the sheer force of His will. Only God can create and transform.

2. He also healed the nobleman's son from a considerable distance away, simply by saying a word. Clearly this is One who transcends time and space, and even disease has to obey His voice. Only God can do this!

3. He healed the Man by the pool of Bethesda by just commanding him to be healed! New muscles and tendons appeared where the others had wasted away. Who else can do that? Only God!

B. In v. 36 we read, *"for the works which the Father has given Me to finish."* Not only do the miracles which we looked at already show He is God in human flesh, His dying on Calvary and rising again from the dead declare without question that He was and is the Son of God. These are the works of redemption. These works more than any other tell us who Jesus is. Paul wrote in **Romans 1:1-4**

"Paul, a bondservant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated to the gospel of God which He promised before through His prophets in the Holy Scriptures, concerning His Son Jesus Christ our Lord, who was born of the seed of David according to the

flesh, and declared to be the Son of God with power according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead.”

III. Witness Three – God the Father, Himself (v. 32, 37-40)

“And the Father Himself, who sent Me, has testified of Me. You have neither heard His voice at any time, nor seen His form. But you do not have His word abiding in you, because whom He sent, Him you do not believe. You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me. But you are not willing to come to Me that you may have life.” (verses 37-40).

A. How did God the Father bear witness to His Son? He bore witness through the Word of God, the revelation that He provide to these very Jewish leaders.

B. There is a threefold indictment here. There is a temptation to look at these statements in terms of the experience of the Old Testament saints, but I think that Jesus is speaking of the activity of “the eyes and ears” of their faith.

1. Remember the statement in **Hebrews 11:25**.

“By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king; for he endured as seeing Him who is invisible.”

2. The Jewish leaders had never by faith heard the voice of God in His Word. Nor had they seen His form moving through the pages of the Old Testament. The Word of God did not abide in them. Although they painstakingly studied the revelation of God, they never absorbed it, understood it, nor did they obey it. How was this truth evident? It was *“because whom He sent, Him you do not believe.”*

C. In **verses 39-40**, Jesus summarizes what He has just said about their denial of the Father’s witness through the Word of God.

“You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me. But you are not willing to come to Me that you may have life.”

1. When I think of this passage, I think of one of my favorite aphorisms. *“Communication is a wonderful thing when it happens.”* Look at how diligently the Father works to communicate with us. Jesus came to glorify the Father, but He glorifies the Father through saving us. If God diligently sought to communicate with us, how much will we be responsible for that communication? Why was that communication not received? We were defective receivers of the communication (**1 Corinthians 2:14**).

“But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually [understood].”

We have heard because of God’s grace to us!

2. The second question that this asks us is, *“Have we come to the Lord Jesus to receive the life He offers?”* We can listen to the witness the Father bears to the Son in the Word of God. We can believe what the Bible says about Jesus and put our trust in Him alone to save us. Or we can find ourselves like these Jewish leaders. We know about the Word of God, but we have never come to know the God of the Word. Without Him there is no life and no salvation.

Hymn # 87 May Jesus Christ Be Praised