

“Being A Witness For Christ”

John 5:31-47

Message by Michael J. Barnard

March 21, 2021

Teaching Aim: To examine the defense Jesus presents when confronted by His Jewish accusers. To understand the Law of God requires two or three witnesses in order to establish a matter. To recognize Jesus called four witnesses to testify on His behalf; double the number needed: John the Baptist; the miracles that Jesus performed; the voice of the Father; and the writings of Sacred Scripture. To realize, Jesus is the only way to salvation!

DIGGING DEEPER INTO GOD’S WORD (BIBLE STUDY)

Part I: The witness of John the Baptist (John 5:31-35)

1. In **verse 17**, which sets the background for today’s study: R.C. Sproul writes in his commentary on the Book of John, *“Most of our English Bible translations begin this verse with the words ‘Jesus said’ or ‘Jesus answered,’ but hidden behind the English is the fact that the verb translated as ‘answered’ is exceedingly rare. It is found only in the context of trials and courtrooms, when a formal defense is given against charges that are made. So John is telling us that Jesus was not simply answering a question. He was giving His legal defense before the authorities who were accusing him of things they deemed worthy of death.”* How did Jesus begin His defense in **verse 31**? Why? (See **Deut. 17:6; 19:15**)

2. What four witnesses did Jesus call to testify on His behalf in **verses 31-47**?
 1. _____
 2. _____
 3. _____
 4. _____

3. A good witness knows the truth and testifies to it. Who is the first witness that we find in **verse 32**? What are some ways that the swearing in process in courts has changed in recent years? Is this for the better or worse in your opinion? Why?

4. What can we learn about the mission of John the Baptist from **verse 33**? What are some other ways that John’s mission is described in Scripture? (See **Isa. 40:3-5; Mal. 3:1; John 1:29b**)

5. Jesus is not dependent upon the testimony of man (John the Baptist), but John’s message about Christ pointed the Jewish people towards salvation if they would only believe. Why do you think so many people today do not believe in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord?

6. How did Jesus describe John in **verse 35**? (See **John 1:6-9; 8:12**) It appears many of the Jewish people were initially fascinated by the message of John, but that soon came to an end. Like a burning and shining lamp, John stopped shining when his flame was snuffed out for standing on the truth of Jesus Christ and for protecting the integrity of God's Word. Have you ever stood on the truth of God's Word to the point that it cost you dearly?

Part II: The witness of Christ's miracles and the words of the Father (John 5:36-38)

1. Who or what did Jesus call to be His second witness (**vs. 36**)? The purpose of miracles is to authenticate that a messenger is from God. What seven signs (or miracles) does the Apostle John use in his gospel to authenticate that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God? (See **John 2:1-11; 4:43-54; 5:1-15; 6:1-14, 16-21; 9:1-41; 11:1-44**)

1.	4.	7.
2.	5.	
3.	6.	

2. According to **verse 37**, who is called as the third witness? On three separate occasions the Father testified that Jesus is His beloved Son. What were those three occasions? (See **Matt. 3:16-17; 17:5-6; John 12:27-30**)

3. What did Jesus accuse the Jewish religious leaders of in **verse 38**? Why? Warren Wiersbe writes, "*The Jewish scribes sought to know the Word of God, but they did not know the God of the Word! They counted the very letters of the text, but they missed the spiritual truths that the text contained.*" What is legalism? Why is it dangerous to Christians? Is a Christianity dependent upon our own works for salvation really Christianity at all? (See **Eph. 2:8-9**)

Part III: The witness of Sacred Scripture (John 5:39-47)

1. What two facts can we learn from **verse 39**? Edwin A. Blum writes, "*Jesus is the Promised One. He is the fulfillment of the Old Testament sacrificial system, the true righteous Servant of Yahweh, the coming Prophet, the Son of Man, the Davidic King, and the promised Son of God and great High Priest. In spite of the clarity of the revelation, they refused to come to Him for life.*" In the Book of Hebrews, we learn even more about Jesus. What do we learn in **Heb 1:1-4**?

2. The key to spiritual growth isn't just having more Bible knowledge, it is knowing Christ personally and applying God's Word to our lives daily. What truth do we learn in **Rom. 12:2**? In spite of all of the study these religious leaders did, what is the sad commentary found in **verse 40**? Why do you think so many people are unwilling to come to Jesus today?

3. Was Jesus looking to receive honor from men or from God (**vs. 41**)? Are you guilty at times of trying to please man rather than God? What were the Jews looking for in their Messiah? Is that what they found in Jesus? Note: Jesus didn't come to reign at His First Advent, He came to die. At His Second Advent Jesus will come as the roaring Lion of Judah and reign.

4. We find the Great Commandment in **Matt. 22:37-40**. According to Martin Luther, if **Matt. 22:37-40** is the Great Commandment, what is the great transgression? How did Jesus know that the Jewish religious leaders did not have the love of God in them (**vs. 42**)?

5. Jesus came in His Father's name. Did the Jewish religious leaders receive Him (**vs. 43**)? Who will they be quick to receive when he arrives? (See **Matt. 24:23-24; 2 Thess. 2:3-10**) What tribe of Israel do some scholars believe the Antichrist will come from? (See **Gen. 49:16-17; Rev. 7:4-8**)

6. The Jewish religious leaders were more interested in the approval of man than they were of the approval of God. What is the best way for us to honor God today? (See **Acts 4:12**)

7. The Jews took great pride in the Hebrew Scriptures, but especially the Pentateuch. The Pentateuch includes the first five books of the Bible: Genesis; Exodus; Leviticus; Numbers; and Deuteronomy. These five books are also known as the books of Moses. According to Jesus, who will accuse the Jewish religious leaders before God (**vs. 45**)? Who was the mediator of the Old Covenant? Who is the Mediator of the New? (See **Heb. 9:11-15; 12:24**)

8. Will following the Law of God save anyone? (See **Rom. 3:19-20**) What will it do? According to **Gal. 3:24**, what is the purpose of the Law? If the Law of God will not save us, what will? (See **Rom. 3:21-22**)
9. It is important to note Jesus affirms the fact that Moses was the author of the Pentateuch in **verses 45-47**. Did the Jews believe the prophecies about Christ in these books and the rest of the Old Testament (**vs. 47**)? If not, why not? (See **John 3:3, 5; 2 Cor. 4:3-4**) How do you see Jesus in the following verses: **Gen. 3:15; Deut. 18:15; Num. 21:4-9; John 3:1-16; Psalms 22; and Isa. 53**?
10. Augustine wrote, *"The New is in the Old concealed, the Old is in the New revealed."* What did Augustine mean? On a scale of 1-10, how are you doing on your spiritual walk and daily quiet time with the Lord?

MINER'S CORNER ~ *Manna to live by!*

- The Law of God requires that every matter be established by two or three witnesses.
- In answering the religious leaders, Jesus used language that is only found in the context of legal proceedings and trials when formal defense is required against a charge.
- Jesus never sinned, but the Jewish religious leaders accused Him of blasphemy.
- John the Baptist had the unique ministry of introducing the Messiah to the Jewish people.
- The Apostle John lists seven miracles in his gospel to prove that Jesus is the Christ.
- The Father verbally testified that Jesus is His beloved Son on three occasions.
- From cover to cover the Bible testifies that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God.
- The evidence is overwhelming: Jesus is Lord!