



## TALKS FOR GROWING CHRISTIANS TRANSCRIPT

### John 5:30-47: Witnesses Who Acknowledge Our Lord's Claim to Be God

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*"I can of Myself do nothing. As I hear, I judge; and My judgment is righteous, because I do not seek My own will but the will of the Father who sent Me.*

*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.*

*41 "I do not receive honor from men. 42 But I know you, that you do not have the love of God in you. 43 I have come in My Father's name, and you do not receive Me; if another comes in his own name, him you will receive. 44 How can you believe, who receive honor from one another, and do not seek the honor that comes from the only God? 45 Do not think that I shall accuse you to the Father; there is one who accuses you—Moses, in whom you trust. 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?"*

#### Background Notes

In the first section of John 5 we have the account of the Lord's miraculous healing of the paralyzed man at the Pool of Bethesda. Rather than praising the Lord for this wonderful miracle, the Jewish leaders found fault with Christ because He had performed the miracle on the Sabbath. Furthermore, these unbelieving Jews were infuriated when Jesus made it clear that He was claiming to be God. Verse 18: *"Therefore the Jews sought all the more to kill Him, because He not only broke the Sabbath, but also said that God was His Father, making Himself equal with God."* In the discussion that followed, the Lord Jesus in no way backed down from His claim to be God -- in fact, He made further statements that backed up His deity! Look at verse 23, for example: *"that all should honor the Son just as they honor the Father. He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent Him."*

From verse 30 to the end of the chapter, the Lord presented several witnesses that support His claim to be God. According to the Old Testament Law, for a matter to be established, two witnesses were required. Deuteronomy 19:15: *"by the mouth of two or three witnesses the matter shall be established."* This then, is the explanation for our Lord's statement in John 5:31: *"If I bear witness of Myself, My witness is not true."* The

Lord was not saying that His testimony is false – He simply meant that, according to the Law, for a testimony to be true or valid there had to be at least two or three witnesses.

And that is exactly what the Lord proceeded to do. In the rest of this chapter He presented supporting witnesses of His claim to be God. And instead of presenting only two or three witnesses, He presented four or five witnesses to fully confirm His claim of deity.

## **Doctrinal / Teaching Points**

### **1. The deity of Christ was confirmed by more that two witnesses.**

The Law said that at least two witnesses were needed to establish a matter. The Lord pointed to five witnesses in this last section of John 5.

First of all, there was the witness of God the Father. Verse 32 says, *"There is another who bears witness of Me, and I know that the witness which He witnesses of Me is true."* We believe that the Lord was referring to the Father here because of the context. Look back at verses 26-27: *"For as the Father has life in Himself, so He has granted the Son to have life in Himself, 27 and has given Him authority to execute judgment also, because He is the Son of Man."* And verse 30: *"I can of Myself do nothing. As I hear, I judge; and My judgment is righteous, because I do not seek My own will but the will of the Father who sent Me."* That is, my judgment is right in line with my Father's will. So, because of the context, the unnamed witness of verse 32 is most likely God the Father.

Now look at verse 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."* When was the Father's voice heard in testimony to the Son? Most likely John was referring to Christ's baptism. Matthew 3:16-17: *"When He had been baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened to Him, and He<sup>a</sup> saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting upon Him. 17 And suddenly a voice came from heaven, saying, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."*

But the Jews didn't receive the witness of the Father. John 5:43 says, *"I have come in My Father's name, and you do not receive Me; if another comes in his own name, him you will receive."* That predication has certainly been fulfilled by the appearances of false "messiahs" over the years! In 135AD a Jewish man named Simon bar Kochba led a rebellion against Rome – the Bar Kochba revolt. He came in his own name, and many thought that he was the messiah, but he was not the Messiah. Let's come right down to our present day. Many thought the late Rabbi Schneerson of Brooklyn, NY, was the messiah. He came in his own name, and many ultra-Orthodox Jews followed him, but he was not the Messiah. Ultimately our Lord's prediction in verse 43 will be fulfilled in the anti-Christ.

The second witness presented by our Lord was John the Baptist (v33): *"You have sent to John, and he has borne witness to the truth."* Also verse 35: *"He was the burning and shining lamp, and you were willing for a time to rejoice in his light."* John was not the light, but he was a lamp to bear witness of the light. John 1:7 says, *"This man came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all through him might believe."* At first the Jews rejoiced in the ministry of John the Baptist. Finally, after 400 long years, a prophet had come -- maybe Israel would finally be delivered from all her oppressors! But they stopped rejoicing when they heard John's message – he told them that they had to acknowledge

that they were sinners, and repent. In verse 34 the Lord said that he wasn't relying on John's testimony -- but it was true, and if they believed it, it would lead them to salvation.

The third witness supporting Jesus' claim to be God were His miracles. Verse 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."* This is why the miracles in the Gospel of John are called "sign miracles" – they point to the deity of Christ. In the miracles of Christ we see **God** at work. We see His power over nature, over demons, over disease, and over death. What a witness to the deity of Christ!

The fourth witness confirming the Lord's claim to be God are the Old Testament Scriptures. Verse 39: *"You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me."* Think of all the Messianic prophecies of the Old Testament! They all take the witness stand in support of the Lord's deity.

And finally, there is a fifth witness, Moses. *"For if you believed Moses, you would believe Me; for he wrote about Me"(v46).* This fifth witness is really part of the fourth, because the writings of Moses are certainly Scripture, but where did Moses write about Christ? We have this specific Messianic prophecy of Deuteronomy 18:15, *"The LORD your God will raise up for you a Prophet like me from your midst, from your brethren. Him you shall hear.."* And also verse 18: *"I will raise up for them a Prophet like you from among their brethren, and will put My words in His mouth, and He shall speak to them all that I command Him."* Besides this prophecy, there are many "types" (pictures) of Christ in the writings of Moses. On the road to Emmaus, the Lord explained to the two disciples all the things that had been written about **Him** in the writings of Moses and the prophets. *"And beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself" (Luke 24:27).* Because the Jews would not receive this witness, the Lord said that the writings of Moses would convict them. Look again at verse 45: *"Do not think that I shall accuse you to the Father; there is one who accuses you—Moses, in whom you trust."*

In John 5 we see four or five witnesses supporting the Lord's claim that He was God. They continue to stand, even to this day, in solid support of the Lord's claim to be God. The deity of Christ was confirmed by more than two witnesses.

## **2. The Word (Christ) cannot be separated from the word (the Scriptures).**

The Word, namely Jesus Christ, cannot be separated from the word, namely the Scriptures: *"But you do not have His word abiding in you, because whom He sent, Him you do not believe" (v38).* In other words, the Lord was saying to the Jews, "You claim to know the Scriptures, but if that were true you would automatically receive me -- because the Word can't be separated from the word!"

Verses 39-40: *"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."* In other words, the Scriptures will lead you to eternal life **if you believe them**, because they testify of Me, and the Word cannot be separated from the word. *"But if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe My words?"(v47).* In other words, Jesus was saying, "You don't believe Me because you really don't believe what Moses was writing. You **say** you do, but you obviously don't, because you don't accept Me."

The Word can't be separated from the word. You can't have one without the other. If you really accept Scripture as the word of God, you will accept Jesus Christ. If you accept Jesus Christ, then you will accept Scripture as God's word. The Word cannot be separated from the word!

## **Practical application**

### **Whose approval do we really want?**

In verse 44, the Lord Jesus said to His critics, "*How can you believe, who receive honor from one another, and do not seek the honor that comes from the only God?*" They were more interested in obtaining praise from one another than they were in obtaining praise from God.

What about us? Whose approval do we really want? If we **really** want and **really** seek God's approval, our lives and lifestyles will be **revolutionized!**

For example, why do we often spend way too much time and money on our homes and furnishings? Whose approval do we really want? Why do some of us spend hours and hours trying to take a few strokes off our golf scores? Whose approval do we really want? Man's approval or God's approval? Why do some of us spend so much time looking in the mirror? Is our goal the glory of God, or for the glory of self?

Whose approval do we **really** want?