



Jesus, the Authenticated Messiah

Lesson 8 John 5:25-47

REVIEW

We ended last week's lesson in John 5:24 with the implications of the three claims of Christ:

1. Equality with God in nature - 5:17-18
2. Equality with God in power - 5:19-21
3. Equality with God in authority - 5:22-23

Jesus made the claim that the Father had committed all judgment to the Son. The implications of these claims are quite simple:

1. Everlasting life is only possible by faith in Christ
2. One must believe that God sent the Son
3. To believe in the Son is to pass from death unto life

Today's passage is really a continuation of these thoughts.

LESSON OBJECTIVES

1. We will study the five witnesses that Jesus offers as proof to validate his claims of divinity.
2. We will gain a greater understanding of the implications of these claims in our lives.

THE FIVE WITNESSES OF CHRIST (5:25-47)

A. The witness of Jesus himself - 5:25-31

5:25 "Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live. **26** For as the Father hath life in himself; so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself; **27** And hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man. **28** Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, **29** And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation. **30** I can of mine own self do nothing: as I hear, I judge: and my judgment is just; because I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me. **31** If I bear witness of myself, my witness is not true."

1. The three acts of Christ¹ are a continuation of Jesus' thoughts in verses 22-24 in which Jesus claimed equality with God in authority - 5:25-29
 - a. All life is in His hands - 5:25-26
 - i. "Verily, verily" means "truly, truly" and is used for emphasis over twenty times in John's gospel. This is Jesus' way of saying, "Pay attention to this! This is important!"
 - ii. A present resurrection that continues into the future - 5:25
 - a) Jesus is speaking of those who are spiritually dead. Compare this to 5:28 which speaks of physical resurrection. - 5:24
 - b) They are under condemnation because they have not believed - 3:18; 5:24

¹ Elmer Towns, *John: Believe and Live* (Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers, 2002), 52-53.

- iii. Just as the Father has life in Himself, He has given it to the Son
 - a) Speaks of giving spiritual life to those who are spiritually dead - **5:24, 28**
 - b) “The Son from all eternity had the right to grant life (1:4). The distinction involves Jesus’ deity versus incarnation. In becoming a man Jesus voluntarily set aside the independent exercise of his divine attributes and prerogatives (**Philippians 2:6-11**). Jesus here affirmed that even in His humanity, the Father granted him ‘life-giving power.’”²
- b. All judgment is in His hands - **5:27, 30**
 - i. Jesus tied His act of having all life in His hands to His title “*Son of God*.” The act of judgment is tied to His title “*Son of man*.” - **5:25, :27**
 - a) “*Son of God*” emphasizes His deity. In John’s Gospel, this is the only place where Jesus refers to Himself as the “*Son of God*.”
 - b) “*Son of man*” emphasizes His humanity but does not negate His deity
 - ii. Four truths about this judgment:
 - a) The Father has given the Son “*authority to execute judgment*” - **5:27**
 - b) This authority is given “*because He is the Son of man*” (God in the flesh) - **5:27**
 - c) His judgment is according to “*the will of the Father*” - **5:30**
 - 1) He only judges what He hears of the Father
 - 2) He does not seek His own will, rather “*the will of the Father*”
 - d) His judgment is just - **5:30**
 - 1) Because He has the proper authority
 - 2) Because He is God in the flesh
 - 3) His judgment is in accordance with the will of God
- c. All resurrection is in His hands - **5:28-29**
 - i. “*Marvel*” means “to wonder”³
 - ii. “*This*” refers to what He has just told them, “Life and judgment are in His hands”
 - iii. Two future resurrections - **5:28-29**
 - a) Daniel prophesied about these two resurrections - **Daniel 12:2**
 - b) “*The hour is coming*” indicates the future
 - c) “*All that are in the graves*” means everyone who is dead
 - d) “*Shall hear his voice*” means this resurrection is caused by the sound of the Son of man’s voice
 - e) “*And shall come forth*” does not indicate choice. They will come forth at the sound of the Lord’s voice.
 - f) Resurrection of life
 - 1) Called the “resurrection of the just” - **Acts 24:15**
 - 2) Daniel called it a resurrection “*to everlasting life*” - **Daniel 12:2**

² John MacArthur, *The MacArthur Study Bible* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1997), 1588.

³ James Strong, *Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible: Greek Dictionary of the New Testament*, p. 36, ref. 2296.

- 3) Resurrection of those who are Christ's at His coming
1 Corinthians 15:20-23; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-17
- 4) *"They that have done good"* must be understood in the context. It is a reference to believing on the Son rather than justification by works. - 5:24

g) Resurrection of damnation

- 1) Called the "resurrection of the unjust" - Acts 24:15
 - 2) Daniel called it a resurrection *"to shame and everlasting contempt"*
Daniel 12:2
 - 3) "All the wicked dead shall rise at once as seen in Revelation 20:5, 13."⁴
 - 4) *"They that have done evil"* denotes that evil is the rejection of Christ that leaves them under condemnation
2. These three acts of Jesus are His personal witness of Himself as divine. "These three acts that He does are acts of God; therefore, they are closely tied to His claim that He is deity because He does the acts of God."⁵ - 5:31
3. *"My witness is not true."*
- a. It does not mean, "If I make these claims, my testimony is false." "Here Jesus is saying that His witness alone was not enough, because the Jews simply would not accept it. Under Jewish, Roman, and Greek law the testimony of a witness was not accepted as evidence in his own case."⁶
 - b. Two witnesses were necessary to verify truth according to Jewish law
Deuteronomy 17:6; Numbers 35:30; John 8:17
4. In other words, Jesus knows that His testimony alone is not enough to really establish the truth of His claims. Though I believe the witness of Jesus Christ, the truthfulness of Jesus' first proof is strengthened by the next four that He offers.

B. The witness of John the Baptist - 5:32-35

5:32 "There is another that beareth witness of me; and I know that the witness which he witnesseth of me is true. **33** Ye sent unto John, and he bare witness unto the truth. **34** But I receive not testimony from man: but these things I say, that ye might be saved. **35** He was a burning and a shining light: and ye were willing for a season to rejoice in his light."

- 1. John's witness is true - 5:32
- 2. The Jews' inquiry to John the Baptist - 5:33
 - a. Jesus cites a specific example that was apparently common knowledge to this group of Jews
 - b. The Jews knew what John had testified
- 3. John's testimony - 5:33, 1:19-23, 27-29
 - a. John 1:19-23 records the events
 - b. John saw himself as the one who would prepare the way of the Lord - Isaiah 40:3-5
 - c. John's testimony was simple, "I am the one who prepares the way for the Messiah, but I am not Him"

⁴ Lester Hutson, *What We Believe and Why*, Exp. Ed. (Houston: Berean Baptist Publications, 1988), 143.

⁵ Towns, p. 52.

⁶ Ibid., p. 53.

- d. Jesus states that John's testimony was true
- e. John gives further testimony in John 1:27-29
- f. John's testimony was simple, "Jesus is the Messiah. He is God in the flesh, the Chosen One of the Old Testament who has come to take away our sins."

4. John's testimony gives life - 5:34-35

- a. The Jews believed John the Baptist could possibly be the Messiah at one time and were willing to rejoice in his light - 5:35
- b. He was a shining light - 5:35
- c. The Jews wouldn't believe John's testimony about Jesus
- d. If they would have, they would have been saved - 5:34

C. The witness of the works of Christ - 5:36

5:36 "But I have greater witness than that of John: for the works which the Father hath given me to finish, the same works that I do, bear witness of me, that the Father hath sent me."

1. Three main views on the "works" of John 5:36

a. Miracles

"Healing the sick and raising the dead."⁷

b. The work of His life

"In general, the whole course of his life and ministry—his revealing God and his will to us, setting up his kingdom among men, reforming the world, destroying Satan's kingdom, restoring fallen man to his primitive purity and felicity, and shedding abroad in men's hearts the love of God and of one another. In particular, the miracles he wrought for the proof of his divine mission witnessed of him"⁸

c. Messianic works

"The distinctively Messianic works prophesied by Daniel. The greatest works of Jesus involved reconciling people with God through the new birth and the offer of living water."⁹

2. Most likely miraculous works

a. "Greater works than these" - 5:20

b. In the context of healing on the Sabbath

c. The Jews at the time of this discourse would not have understood "the whole of His life" or "Messianic works."

D. The witness of the Father - 5:37-38

5:37 "And the Father himself, which hath sent me, hath borne witness of me. Ye have neither heard his voice at any time, nor seen his shape. **38** And ye have not his word abiding in you: for whom he hath sent, him ye believe not."

1. The Father sent Jesus - 5:37

⁷ Albert Barnes, Notes on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1972), 237.

⁸ Matthew Henry, Commentary on the New Testament (Hendrickson Publishers, 1991), 752.

⁹ Towns, 54.

2. The Father's witness - 5:37

a. The works of Jesus

Remember when Nicodemus came to Jesus in John 3? He said to Jesus, *"Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him."* - 3:2

b. At the baptism of Jesus - **Matthew 3:13-17; Mark 1:9-11; Luke 3:21-22**

3. John the Baptist testified of the Father's witness of Jesus - 1:32-34

4. The Jews' rejection of this witness - 5:38

E. The witness of the Scriptures - 5:39-47

5:39 "Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me. **40** And ye will not come to me, that ye might have life. **41** I receive not honour from men. **42** But I know you, that ye have not the love of God in you. **43** I am come in my Father's name, and ye receive me not: if another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive. **44** How can ye believe, which receive honour one of another, and seek not the honour that cometh from God only? **45** Do not think that I will accuse you to the Father: there is one that accuseth you, even Moses, in whom ye trust. **46** For had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me; for he wrote of me. **47** But if ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe my words?"

1. The Jews' attitude toward Scripture - 5:39

a. They thought the Scriptures contained life

b. Obedience was key to them

2. The Jews' rejection of Christ - 5:40-41

a. You will not come to me - 5:40

b. Therefore, you don't have life - 5:40

c. They don't have the love of God in them - 5:42

d. They don't receive Jesus - 5:43

e. They don't seek the honor that comes from God - 5:44

3. The scriptures testify of Christ, specifically the books of Moses - 5:45-47

a. The books of Moses will accuse them - 5:44

b. Genesis

i. The Savior was promised to come from the seed of the woman - **Genesis 3:15**

ii. Symbolized by the coats of skins that were made to cover Adam's sin
Genesis 3:21

iii. The ram caught in the thicket to take the place of Isaac on the mountain - **Genesis 22**

iv. Moses prophesied the Messiah would be from the seed of Abraham (**Genesis 12:3**), Isaac (**Genesis 17:19**) and Jacob (**Numbers 24:17**) and from the tribe of Judah (**Genesis 49:10**)

v. The ark in whom you will find salvation from the judgment of God - **Genesis 6-9**

c. Exodus

i. The Passover Lamb - **Exodus 12**

ii. The bread of life which came down from heaven - 6:33; **Exodus 16**

d. Leviticus

i. The sacrifice for sins - **Leviticus 1:3**

ii. The one and holy Great High Priest - **Leviticus 21:10; Hebrews 10:11-12**

e. Numbers

The brass serpent that Moses placed on the pole upon whom you could look and live - **Numbers 21:9; John 3:14**

f. Deuteronomy

The True Prophet - **Deuteronomy 18:15-19**

g. If they would have believed Moses, they would have believed in Jesus - **5:46**

h. Their rejection of Moses' writings, in terms of believing that Jesus was the Messiah of those writings, led to their rejection of the words of Jesus

LIFE LESSONS

1. Those who have never believed *must* believe in Jesus Christ - **5:24**
2. Those who are believers *must* yield to the Lordship of Christ. He is worthy of becoming our King, our Lord and our Master.