

Title: **FIVE REASONS
FOR TRUSTING CHRIST**

Text: John 5:30-47

Subject: *Evidences of Jesus as the Messiah*

Date: Sunday Morning — February 22, 2009

Tape: John #42

Reading: *Acts 17:1-34*

Introduction:

God the Holy Spirit declares that — “*Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God*” (1 John 5:1). My prayer and heart’s desire to God for you is that you might believe that Jesus the Christ, that you might trust the Lord Jesus Christ. **Our faith says**, “*We believe and are sure that thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God*” (John 6:69). **We believe that Jesus of Nazareth is the Christ, the Messiah, promised by God in all the Old Testament prophets.**

Peter’s confession, “*Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God*” (Matthew 16:16), is the foundation of Christianity, the foundation upon which the church of God is built, and the foundation of the gospel. This is the foundation upon which we are built and the foundation upon which we are built.

If I dare presume to call upon you and urge you to trust Christ, to trust your immortal soul to him, to trust his blood, his righteousness, his grace, his intercession, to trust Christ alone for your everlasting salvation, — If I dare presume to persuade you to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, it is only reasonable that you should say to me, “Pastor, you are going to have to give me some reasons why I should trust him. You are going to have to convince me that I can and should trust Christ.”

I hope you have that attitude. And I pray that God the Holy Spirit will enable you to hear what he has written in his Word and give you faith in the Lord Jesus. Turn with me to the 5th chapter of John’s Gospel. We will begin reading at verse 30. The title of my message is **FIVE REASONS FOR TRUSTING CHRIST**. Here, in John 5:30-47) the Lord Jesus himself is speaking. He is speaking to the Jews and their religious leaders, the Pharisees.

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- He had just performed a miracle at the pool of Bethesda, healing the impotent man, by which he showed himself to be the Messiah, the Christ of God (vv. 1-9).
- He declared himself to be God, one with the Father, a man equal with God (vv. 17-18).
- Rather than believing him, these Jews sought to kill him, accusing him of blasphemy; but the Lord Jesus pressed his claims upon them more fully, declaring that everything he had done was the work of God and that the Father had given him all authority and power as the Messiah, the Son of Man, the incarnate God (vv. 19-29).
- He declared plainly that he and he alone had it in his power, as the Christ of God, to give eternal life to whom he will, and that in the last day he would both raise the dead and execute judgment upon the righteous and the wicked as the Christ.

Having made such assertions, our Master now gives five witnesses to himself. By these five witnesses, he shows irrefutably that he is the Christ promised in the Old Testament Scriptures. As Paul reasoned with the people of Thessalonica out of the Scriptures, “*Opening and alleging, that Christ must needs have suffered, and risen again from the dead; and that this Jesus, whom I preach unto you, is Christ*” (Acts 17:2-3), I want to reason with you out of the Scriptures, and give you **FIVE REASONS FOR TRUSTING CHRIST**. I will give you these five reasons in the witnesses to which the Lord Jesus himself pointed in this passage.

In verse 30, the Savior openly declares that he is God the Son, one with and equal with God the Father, in all things working the works of God.

(John 5:30) “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.”

The Son cannot act independently of the Father, or the Father of the Son. He who is the Christ, the Son of God, is in all things (in will, in work, and in word) in complete unison with the Father.

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Then, in the next verse, he asserts — “*If I bear witness of myself, my witness is not true.*” Turn over to John 8:14, and you will read just the opposite of this. In John 8:14 the Lord Jesus says, “*Though I bear record of myself, my record is true.*” But here (John 5:31) he is speaking in reference to the law of God which required two or three witnesses for anything to be established. According to the law no man can be a witness in his own cause. The words of men do need confirmation, but not so the Son of God. However, Christ came to “*fulfill all righteousness*” and to do all that he did “*according to the Scriptures*” (Deuteronomy 19:15; Matthew 18:15).

The law required two or three witnesses for anything to be established. So our Lord Jesus, to establish his claims as the Christ of God, the Messiah, gives five undeniable witnesses to his Deity and his mission as the Messiah.

JOHN THE BAPTIST

The first witness our Savior calls to himself is John the Baptist (vv. 32-35).

(John 5:32-35) “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.”

John the Baptist was that one of whom Malachi spoke, calling him Elijah, the forerunner and herald of the Christ (Malachi 4:5-6; Matthew 11:14-15).

(Malachi 4:5-6) “Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD: (6) And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse.”

(Matthew 11:14-15) “And if ye will receive *it*, this is Elias, which was for to come. (15) He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.”

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The Lord Jesus reminded these Jews that John the Baptist bore faithful witness to both his person and his work, when they sent messengers to ask him who he was (John 1:20-27).

(John 1:20-29) “And he confessed, and denied not; but confessed, I am not the Christ. (21) And they asked him, What then? Art thou Elias? And he saith, I am not. Art thou that prophet? And he answered, No. (22) Then said they unto him, Who art thou? that we may give an answer to them that sent us. What sayest thou of thyself? (23) He said, I *am* the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord, as said the prophet Esaias. (24) And they which were sent were of the Pharisees. (25) And they asked him, and said unto him, Why baptizest thou then, if thou be not that Christ, nor Elias, neither that prophet? (26) John answered them, saying, I baptize with water: but there standeth one among you, whom ye know not; (27) He it is, who coming after me is preferred before me, whose shoe’s latchet I am not worthy to unloose. (28) These things were done in Bethabara beyond Jordan, where John was baptizing. (29) The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.”

“*But I receive not testimony from man*” (v. 34). — He was not appealing to the witness of John for a confirmation of his own words and works, but he appealed to John’s testimony for their sakes that they might be saved. John was sent of God to arouse men’s attention and to produce in them a sense of their deep need for the One who was to come. John was indeed a famous light, burning in the knowledge and love of the truth. For a while they pretended great affection for him; but when they saw that John’s one purpose was to bear witness of Christ the Lamb, they turned away from him; for they looked for a more splendid and glorious Messiah than the one Christ appeared to be. — They despised John, the messenger, because they hated and despised Christ, the Message.

I call upon you to trust Christ because he is that One to whom John the Baptist gave witness. John went before his face to prepare his ways (Luke 1:76-79).

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(Luke 1:77-79) “To give knowledge of salvation unto his people by the remission of their sins, (78) Through the tender mercy of our God; whereby the dayspring from on high hath visited us, (79) To give light to them that sit in darkness and *in* the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace.”

(Matthew 11:14-15) “And if ye will receive *it*, this is Elias, which was for to come. (15) He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.”

HIS OWN WORKS

In verse 36 the Lord Jesus calls for his own works to bear witness of him.

(John 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.”

Isn't it a wonderful thing to realize that the Lord Jesus looked upon the works his Father gave him to perform for us as his Father's gift to him (John 17:4)? He calls the redemption of our souls the “*joy set before him*” (Hebrews 12:2).

Our Savior's mighty works, which he performed while walking through this earth, bore unmistakable witness to who he is and what he came to do. He frequently appealed to his works as affording Divine testimony to himself (John 10:25, 38; John 14:11; John 15:24).

(John 10:25) “Jesus answered them, I told you, and ye believed not: the works that I do in my Father's name, they bear witness of me.”

(John 10:38) “But if I do, though ye believe not me, believe the works: that ye may know, and believe, that the Father *is* in me, and I in him.”

(John 14:11) “Believe me that I *am* in the Father, and the Father in me: or else believe me for the very works' sake.”

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(John 15:24) “If I had not done among them the works which none other man did, they had not had sin: but now have they both seen and hated both me and my Father.”

He caused the blind to see, the lame to walk, the deaf to hear, the dumb to speak, the lepers to be cleansed, and the dead to be raised to life!

(Luke 7:19-22) “And John calling *unto him* two of his disciples sent *them* to Jesus, saying, Art thou he that should come? or look we for another? (20) When the men were come unto him, they said, John Baptist hath sent us unto thee, saying, Art thou he that should come? or look we for another? (21) And in that same hour he cured many of *their* infirmities and plagues, and of evil spirits; and unto many *that were* blind he gave sight. (22) Then Jesus answering said unto them, Go your way, and tell John what things ye have seen and heard; how that the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, to the poor the gospel is preached.”

J. C. Ryle calls attention to five things about our Lord’s miracles.

1. Their number. They were very many.
2. Their greatness. They were mighty, supernatural works.
3. Their public nature. They were not done secretly, but publicly for all to behold.
4. Their nature. They were always works of love, mercy, and compassion. They were not just exhibitions of power, but beneficial to men.
5. Their direct appeal to man’s senses. They were real, visible, and would bear any examination.

Obviously, our Lord spoke these words for the benefit of future generations, for he speaks of the works the Father gave him to finish, as works that bore witness to him as the sent One of God (Matthew 1:21). May God give you grace to behold the works he has finished, and trust him!

- He finished the law.
- He finished the prophecies.
- He finished the sacrifices.
- He finished righteousness.
- He finished sin!

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- He finished death!

I call upon you to trust the Lord Jesus Christ because he has finished the work the Father gave him to accomplish as the covenant Surety and Savior of his people. He has saved his people from their sins by the sacrifice of himself.

GOD THE FATHER

Third, our Savior declares that his Father is his witness (vv. 37-38).

(John 5:37) “And the Father himself, which hath sent me, hath borne witness of me.”

At his baptism, upon the Mount of Transfiguration, and in the totality of the Book of Inspiration, the Father bears witness of the Lord Jesus, as his Son, as our Mediator, and as the Christ (Matthew 3:17; 17:5; 1 John 5:7-10).

(Matthew 3:13-17) “Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan unto John, to be baptized of him. (14) But John forbad him, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me? (15) And Jesus answering said unto him, Suffer *it to be so* now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness. Then he suffered him. (16) And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him: (17) And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.”

(Matthew 17:1-5) “And after six days Jesus taketh Peter, James, and John his brother, and bringeth them up into an high mountain apart, (2) And was transfigured before them: and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light. (3) And, behold, there appeared unto them Moses and Elias talking with him. (4) Then answered Peter, and said unto Jesus, Lord, it is good for us to be here: if thou wilt, let us make here three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias. (5) While he yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold a voice out

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of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him.”

(1 John 5:7-10) “For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one. (8) And there are three that bear witness in earth, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood: and these three agree in one. (9) If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater: for this is the witness of God which he hath testified of his Son. (10) He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself: he that believeth not God hath made him a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son.”

Though the Father bears witness of him, the Lord Jesus said to these Jews, and to you who refuse to trust him, “*Ye have neither heard his voice at any time, nor seen his shape. And ye have not his word abiding in you: for whom he hath sent, him ye believe not*” (vv. 37-38).

- You have not heard his voice.
- You have not seen him who is the image of the invisible God, the Revelation of God.
- You do not have his Word in you. — You may have it memorized; but it is not in you.

None are so blind as those who will not see. None are so deaf as those who will not hear! Will you hear the voice of God who spoke from heaven? **I call on you to trust the Son of God because God the Father has born witness of him with own voice.** Every voice heard from heaven throughout the Old Testament dispensation, from the Garden of Eden to the Incarnation, was the voice of God identifying him.

- The Voice Calling Adam
- The Voice Speaking to Abraham
- The Voice in the Bush

THE SCRIPTURES

The fourth witness to our Savior is the Volume of Old Testament Scripture. All the Old Testament speaks of Christ (v. 39).

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(John 5:39) “Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me.”

Look at this verse line by line. “**Search the Scriptures.**” This refers to the Old Testament. The New Testament was not yet written. Yet, what is here said of the Old Testament may (and should) be applied to the New. All the Old Testament Scriptures were given by Divine inspiration. They were frequently referred to and appealed to by our Savior and his Apostles as the only standard and basis for all true doctrine and the solitary authority for all things in the worship of God. Therefore, we are here commanded to “*search the Scriptures,*” to diligently examine the Book of God, if we would know the mind and will of God.

- Test all doctrine by the Scriptures.
- Test every ordinance of religion by the Scriptures.

Like the churches and the religious world around us, the Jews had the Scriptures, the sacred oracles of God, in their possession. They read them and expounded them every sabbath day in their synagogues. They brought their children up, teaching them the Scriptures.

Look at the next line. — “**For in them ye think ye have eternal life.**” The Jews of our Lord’s day, like religionists today, presumed that by learning the letter of the Scriptures and practicing the ordinances of Divine worship obtained and would inherit eternal life!

- They adored the Scriptures, but despised the Savior of whom the Scriptures spoke!
- They revered the written Word, but despised the living Word revealed by it!
- They made idols of ordinances, and refused to worship him portrayed in the ordinances!

Sadly, in our day, multitudes who profess to be worshippers of God, read every dime-store novel and piece of fiction they can find, while the Book of God lays gathering dust from Sunday to Sunday beside the coat they wear to church! In the 1600s the French reformer, **Pierre Du Moulin**, wrote of his countrymen, “While they burned us for reading the Scriptures, we burned with zeal to be reading from them. Now with our liberty is bred also negligence and disesteem of God’s word.” — Is that not the case with us?

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“And they are they which testify of me!” — “The babe of Bethlehem,” John Trapp said, “is bound up in these swathing bands.” All the Book of God speaks of Christ; but our Lord Jesus here specifically declares that the Old Testament Scriptures testify of him. In the Old Testament Scriptures we read that this man, Christ Jesus...

- Is Jehovah, the Son of God, God, and the Mighty God.
- Is the Prophet, Priest and King of his people.
- Would be born of a virgin, born in Bethlehem, and born of the tribe of Judah.
- Would perform miracles of mercy upon the bodies of men.
- Would be betrayed by a friend and sold for thirty pieces of silver.
- Would be scourged, beaten, spit upon and mocked.
- Would be despised and rejected of men and nailed upon the cursed tree between two thieves as our Substitute (Psalm 22; Isaiah 53).
- Men would cast lots for his vesture.
- That he would be buried, rise from the dead the third day, and ascend up into heaven.
- Would make intercession for transgressors as our Advocate and High Priest, will come again, make all things new, and sit in judgment over all nations!

I call upon you to trust the Lord Jesus because he is the One to whom all the Scriptures bear witness.

MOSES AND THE LAW

Then, in verses 45-47, our Lord Jesus points to Moses and the law as a fifth witness to him.

(John 5:40-47) “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.

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(47) But if ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe my words?”

The Jews claimed to believe Moses and claimed to love the law of God given by his hand. But everything Moses wrote, every prophecy, every precept, every promise, every pattern, every picture of the law pointed to Christ (John 1:45; Hebrews 8:1; 10:1-4).

(John 1:45) “Philip findeth Nathanael, and saith unto him, We have found him, of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.”

(Hebrews 8:1) “Now of the things which we have spoken *this is* the sum: We have such an high priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens;”

(Hebrews 10:1-4) “For the law having a shadow of good things to come, *and* not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect. (2) For then would they not have ceased to be offered? because that the worshippers once purged should have had no more conscience of sins. (3) But in those *sacrifices there is* a remembrance again *made* of sins every year. (4) For *it is* not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins.”

I call upon you to come to Christ, to trust the Son of God, because it is most reasonable for you to do so. These five witnesses should convince any reasonable person to trust Christ.

- John the Baptist
- The Works He Performed
- The Father’s Voice
- The Scriptures
- Moses and the Law

But it was not a lack of evidence that kept these Jews from believing on the Lord Jesus; and it is not a lack of evidence that keeps you from trusting him. That which keeps sinners from Christ is the depravity of their hearts and the perversity of their wills. That which keeps you from faith in Christ is your obstinate, depraved heart, that heart that is unwilling to

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acknowledge your need of Christ and incapable of trusting him, because of the enmity that is in you against God.

So I send you home with the prayer that God, the God of all grace, will be pleased to do for you what you cannot and will not do for yourself. May he pour out his Spirit upon you, give you life in Christ, and cause you to trust him!

Amen.