

Because it's been a few months since we've been in John's gospel—let me begin by very briefly reviewing this 5th chapter—the chapter larger divides itself into two parts—[1] a miracle (vv1-15), and [2] a discourse (vv16-47)—now if you remember I've mentioned several times before, that these two often went together—that is—our Savior would perform a miracle as a means to introduce a discourse—the miracles often illustrated the discourse...

Thus—within the discourse our Savior provides two proofs of His eternal divinity—[a] His works (vv16-30), and [b] His Witnesses (vv31-47)—His works were basically two—He gives life and death—that is—He gives salvation to His elect and He pronounces damnation on His enemies—salvation is given in the form of two resurrections—the first is spiritual (present) and the second bodily (future)...

With regards to His Witnesses—these are basically four—John the Baptist, His works, His Father, and the Holy Scriptures—these four testified to His eternal Sonship—now what I've decided to do is, to consider this morning the first three of these—John the Baptist, His works, and His Father, leaving the fourth witness to next week...

Under the OC, to be convicted of a crime, there needed to be two or more witnesses, Deut.19:15—"One witness shall not rise against a man concerning any iniquity or any sin that he commits; by the mouth of two or three witnesses the matter shall be established"—thus—our Savior here enlists several witnesses against the unbelieving Jews...

- I. His Forerunner
- II. His Works
- III. His Father
- IV. Lessons

I. His Forerunner

1. Before we actually consider John the Baptist (vv33-35)—I need to first suggest two introductory thoughts...
2. [a] Christ did not bear witness of Himself, v31—"If I bear witness of Myself, My witness is not true"—this no doubt is a difficult statement...
3. I suggest it's best to understand our Him as saying—"If I bore witness of Myself exclusively, my witness would not be true..."
4. In other words—our Savior did not bear witness of Himself, by Himself, or alone, but had the witness of His Father...
5. V32—"There is another who bears witness of Me, and I know that the witness which He witnesses of Me is true..."
6. This refers to His Father, as we will learn from vv36-37—thus our Savior is subjecting Himself to the law...
7. Jn.8:13-18—"The Pharisees therefore said to Him, You bear witness of Yourself; Your witness is not true. Jesus answered and said to them, Even if I bear witness of Myself, My witness is true, for I know where I came from and where I am going; but you do not know where I come from and where I am going. You judge according to the flesh; I judge no one. And yet if I do judge, My judgment is true; for I am not alone, but I *am* with the Father who sent Me. It is also written in your law that the testimony of two men is true. I am One who bears witness of Myself, and the Father who sent Me bears witness of Me..."
8. [b] Christ did not need the witness of man, v33-34—"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..."
9. Now—again this statement can be misunderstood—Christ is not saying that He doesn't use the witness of man...
10. But—He is saying—He doesn't rely merely upon man's witness, because He has greater witnesses in His works and Father...

11. V36—"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 man, that the Father has sent Me..."
12. Thus—while Christ had no need for these "lesser witnesses"—He never the less used them as valid witnesses...
13. Now—this brings us briefly to the actual witness of John the Baptist—and I want to suggest three things about it...
14. [1] The NATURE of His witness, v33—"You have sent to John, and he has borne witness TO THE TRUTH..."
15. This is the fundamental point of a witness—it points to the truth—and specifically the truth of who Christ is...
16. Now—if we were to re-examine the first three chapters of this gospel we would find John bearing witness several times...
17. Jn.1:15—"John bore witness of Him and cried out, saying, This was he or who I said, He who comes after me is preferred before me, for He was before me..."
18. Jn.1:29—"The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world! This is He of whom I said, After me comes a Man who is preferred before me, for He was before me..."
19. Jn.1:32—"And John bore witness, saying, I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and He remained upon Him....34 I have seen and testified that this is the Son of God (Jn.1:29-34; 3:26-36)..."
20. Thus—fundamentally—John the Baptist bore witness of two things—the PERSON and WORK of Jesus Christ...
21. [2] The PURPOSE of His witness, v34—"Yet I do not receive [seek] testimony from man, but I say these things that you may be saved..."
22. That is—Christ is reminding them of what John said—so that they would be saved—He's reminding them of John's witness...
23. In other words—the witness or testimony of John was sufficient and was intended for—salvation from sin...
24. I really believe that this little phrase is among the most glorious statements found anywhere within God's Word...
25. Now—we are going to see here in a minute from v35—that though they rejoiced in the truth for a little while, they failed to believe it so as to be saved...
26. But—this does nothing to alter the purpose of Christ in giving this witness—He gave it that they might be saved...
27. Jn.1:6-8—"There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. This man came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all through him might believe. He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light..."
28. [3] The REJECTION of His witness, v35—"He was the burning and shining lamp, and you were willing for a time to rejoice in his light..."
29. That is—they endured his preaching and testimony for a time—and some professed to believe it—but in the end rejected it...
30. [a] All Christians, and especially preachers, must bear witness of truth—the truth about God, sin, Christ, and eternity...
31. Acts 1:8—"But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth..."
32. I love the way our Savior describes John—"He was the burning and shining lamp"—he was not the Light but a lamp...
33. A lamp needs filling—it doesn't generate light in and of itself—John was but a lamp who testified of the Light...
34. This is what all Christians are sent to do—be witnesses of the Light—testify of the truth of God in Jesus Christ...
35. [b] Christians are not responsible for how people respond to that witness—oftentimes it's rejected and despised...
36. There were many people willing to rejoice in John's testimony temporarily—but NOT embrace it savingly...

37. In fact—not only will our testimony at times be rejected—but we will be hated and mistreated because of it...
38. For example—some of you know what eventually happened to John the Baptist—in that he was beheaded...
39. Rev.20:4—"Then *I saw* the souls of those who had been beheaded for their witness to Jesus and for the word of God, who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received *his* mark on their foreheads or on their hands. And they lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years..."

II. His Works

1. V36—"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..."
2. Here I need to answer the question—WHAT works are meant by—"the works which the Father has given Me to finish..."
3. Well—I suggest that in the broad sense our Savior refers to the whole of His Messianic work given Him by His Father...
4. This includes Him securing redemption by His life, death, and resurrection, as well as His applying redemption through His Spirit...
5. This is what He mentioned early in the chapter—when He said that He was able to do the very works of God (4:34; 17:4)...
6. All of these works bore witness to Christ of who He was—they all vindicated His claim of being the Son of God...
7. Mk.15:39—"So when the centurion, who stood opposite Him, saw that He cried out like this and breathed His last, he said, Truly this Man was the Son of God..."
8. 1Tim.3:16—"God was manifested in the flesh, vindicated by the Spirit, seen by angels, preached among the Gentiles..."
9. But—I agree with the majority of commentators—that by WORKS our Savior primarily referred to His miracles...
10. A.W. Pink—"His works bore unmistakable witness to Him. He gave hearing to the deaf, speech to the dumb, sight to the blind, cleansing to the leper, deliverance to the captives of the Devil, life to the dead. He walked the waves, stilled the wind, calmed the sea, He turned water into wine, cleansed the Temple single-handed, and fed a great multitude with a few loaves and fishes. And these miracles were performed by His own inherent power..."
11. Now—at this point I need to answer another question—HOW did His signs and miracles bear witness of Him...
12. [1] They bore witness that He was the Son of God—that is—His works testified that He was eternally divine...
13. Now—here a question might come up—but wouldn't his suggest that the apostles were divine because they too performed miracles...
14. No—it doesn't because if you remember—the apostles were only able to do miracles by the power of His Spirit...
15. But—this was not so with Christ—for He performed miracles in His own name, by His own eternal power...
16. Thus—our Savior's miracles bore witness to His divinity—they displayed His infinite power and compassion...
17. [2] They bore witness that He was the Messiah sent from God—that is—the Christ—the Savior of sinners...
18. This is first seen in that the OT Scriptures foretold that the coming Messiah—would perform great miracles...
19. But—these miracles would not only be good works, in that they were acts of divine power and compassion...
20. But—they were works that pointed to deep spiritual truth—they illustrated in graphic ways—salvation from sin...

21. Leon Morris—"We have seen that John in his Gospel often calls Jesus' miracles 'signs,' an important word, for it tells us that these are not simply works of power, but that they are meaningful. They point beyond themselves and convey spiritual truths..."
22. Matt.11:2-6—"And when John had heard in prison about the works of Christ, he sent two of his disciples and said to Him, Are You the Coming One, or do we look for another? Jesus answered and said to them, God and tell John the things which you hear and see: The blind see and the lame walk; the lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear; the dead are raised up and the poor have the gospel preached to them. And blessed is he who is not offended because of Me (Isa.35:5-7)..."
23. Jn.10:24-25—"Then the Jews surrounded Him and said to Him, How long do You keep us in doubt? If You are the Christ, tell us plainly. Jesus answered them, I told you, and you do not believe. The works that I do in My Father's name, they bear witness of Me..."
24. Jn.10:37-38—"If I do not do the works of My Father, do not believe Me; but if I do, though you do not believe Me, believe the works, that you may know and believe that the Father is in Me, and I in Him (Jn.20:30-31)..."
25. Thus—miracles were signs intended to validate the messenger as being from God—that he was sent from God (Numb.14:11-12; Ex.4:1-9; Mk.16:19-20)...

III. His Father

1. V37—"And the Father Himself, who sent Me, has testified of Me. You have neither heard His voice at any time, nor seen His form..."
2. Now—I suggest we have a twofold witness of the Father concerning His Son—at His baptism, and in OT Scripture...
3. [1] The Father testified of His Son at His baptism—that is—He verbally testified of His true and eternal identity...
4. Matt.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 saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting upon Him. And suddenly a voice came from heaven, saying, This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased..."
5. [2] The Father testified of His Son in OT Scripture, v37—"You have neither heard His voice at any time, nor seen His form..."
6. Now—some have sought to apply this phrase to His baptism, which means—they were not present at that event...
7. But—I trust it is evident that our Savior is saying more than merely—you were not present at My baptism...
8. I suggest the best way to understand it is—is to connect it not with what went before, but with what follows...
9. V38—"But you do not have His word abiding in you, because whom He sent, Him you do not believe"—this verse explains the former statement...
10. I suggest that by "hearing His voice" and "seeing His form" is simply meant—they did not believe the OT Scriptures...
11. V39—"You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life and these are they which testify of Me..."
12. In other words—to hear His voice and to see His form simply means—to savingly hear and see the TRUTH...
13. V25—"Most assuredly, I say to you, the hour is coming, and now is, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God; and those who hear will live..."
14. John Calvin—"After having complained that they do not receive him, Christ breaks out in still more severe language against their blindness. When he says that *they had never heard the voice of God, or seen his shape*, these are metaphorical expressions, by which he intends to state generally that they are utterly estranged from the knowledge of God. For as men are made known by the countenance and speech, so God utters *his voice* to us by the voice of the Prophets, and, in the sacraments, takes, as it were, a visible form, from which he may be known by us according to our feeble capacity..."

15. In other words—God had testified of Christ, throughout the OT Scriptures, in words as well as types and shadows...
16. 2Cor.3:14-16—"But their minds were blinded. For until this day the same veil remains unlifted in the reading of the OT, because the veil is taken away in Christ. But even to this day, when Moses is read, a veil lies on their heart..."
17. Thus—for all there reading, studying, and teaching of the OT—they had never heard His voice or seen His form...
18. Song 2:14—"O my dove, in the clefts of the rock, in the secret places of the cliff, let me see your face, let me hear your voice; for your voice is sweet, and your face is lovely..."

IV. Applications

1. Here—I want to close our time this morning—by summarizing all that we've learned into two applications...
2. These witnesses that our Savior provides—have a twofold purpose—to provide reason to believe Him or evidence to condemn us...
3. [1] The REASONS for believing God's witness of Christ—let me briefly suggest two reasons to believe this witness...
4. [a] The truthfulness of God—that is—the witnesses that Christ appeals to are trustworthy—worthy of our trust...
5. The testimony of John the Baptist, Christ's works, and the Father (both at His baptism and in Scripture) is trustworthy...
6. Oh my friends—the Christian faith isn't built upon lies—it's built upon the sure testimony of God concerning His Son...
7. [b] The sincerity of God—by this I think back to that phrase at the end of v34—"I say these things that you may be saved..."
8. This is without doubt an amazing statement—especially as we consider who our Savior is here speaking to...
9. Who is the "YOU" of this phrase—"I say these things that YOU may be saved"—it's the unbelieving Jews...
10. The very same Jews who seek to seek to kill Him, and eventually would plot with the Romans to crucify Him...
11. Now—I suggest this affords great encouragement—if these things were said that the Jews would be saved—then it includes us...
12. [2] The DANGERS of rejecting God's witness of Christ—the passage before us has a legal and judicial feel to it...
13. The unbelieving Jews were being arraigned by God—through Christ He was finding them guilty of their unbelief...
14. Throughout the OT—God promised His Son—and He warned that those who reject Him would be judged...
15. Deut.18:18-19—"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. And it shall be that whoever will not hear My words, which He speaks in My name, I will require it of him..."
16. Jn.3:31-36—"He who comes from above is above all; he who is of the earth is earthly and speaks of the earth. He who comes from heaven is above all. And what He has seen and heard, that He testifies; and no one receives His testimony. He who has received His testimony has certified that God is true. For He whom God has sent speaks the words of God, for God does not give the Spirit by measure. The Father loves the Son, and has given all things into His hand. He who believes in the Son has everlasting life; and he who does not believe the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him (1Jn.5:6-13)..."