

John 16 – Epistemology of Jesus: Proof of His Truth

Dr. Leon L. Sanders
John 5:30-47

Law of Witnesses (Accusers)

- Law clearly details the requirements necessary to determine the truth of any statement/prophecy (Ex 18:15-18)
 - No truth could be established by a single testimony
 - Required 2-3 witnesses to establish truth/charge
- John established truth of Christ in Opening Hymn
 - Christ repeats these witnesses to prove His claims - He is God's Son and speaking God's message of salvation

Who is a Prophet?

- Prophet {נביא} - One who speaks what he hears (Ex 7:1-2)
 - God made Moses equal to Pharaoh - A god {Prophet}
 - Aaron was prophet to Pharaoh - Saying Moses' words
 - This shows the role of prophet - Giving God's Word
- Test of a prophet - 100% accuracy or death (De 18:15; 18:21-22)
 - Was Christ The Prophet foretold by Moses? (De 18:15)

Requirements of a Prophet (Dc 18:17-22)

- Not just anyone could be an OT prophet, though many claimed to speak for God as his prophet (Is 28:16-22)
 - Had to be Hebrew (Jewish) - Excludes all Gentiles
 - Speak God's message, conformed to the Law and previous revelation, though may not have understood it (Dn 8:15; Mt 13:17; Hc 11:39-40; JPs 1:10-12)
- Old Covenant was given by the prophets (men) but New Covenant confirmed by Messiah (Son) (He 1:1-2)

Messiah as Prophet

- All prophets spoke by Holy Spirit, their message was not to be interpreted apart from God - False prophet (2Pe 1:19-21)
- Christ is The Prophet foretold by Moses speaking God's salvation message after baptism by Holy Spirit (Dc 18:15; Mt 3:16-17)
 - Prophet speaks God's truth - Christ came from the Father speaking the Father's truth (Jc 1:17-18)

Witnesses to Christ as Prophet

- Who/What are the witnesses to prove the truth of Messiah's words - God's Son and Judge over all men
 - Witness of Man - John the Baptist, whom Jews accepted as a prophet, proclaimed Jesus as Messiah (Jc 1:6-8, 19-34)
 - Nicodemus said the signs/miracles were acknowledged to be from God as no man possessed such ability (Jc 3:1-2)
- Ergo - Christ is both God's Son and Judge

Scripture is the Third Witness

- No one since Messiah's resurrection has seen His works nor heard His voice
 - All we have to validate the claims of Christ is the Bible
 - If one doubts the Bible there is no foundation for belief
- If the Bible had *one* author then its claims would be circular reasoning {believe what I say because I wrote them - logical fallacy} Bible had many prophets

Internal Consistency

- Though the Bible had many prophets {authors} there is an internal consistency as God is the overall author
 - Bible is "God *expired*" into His witnesses who inspired the message received from God and repeated it for us (1Ti 3:14-17)
 - No one can have a *private* {variant} interpretation that violates other revelation {False Prophet} (2Pe 1:19-21)

Law of Non-Contradiction (LNC)

- Simple rule of logic stating that a truth cannot be both true and false simultaneously
 - Theft is either right or wrong; it cannot be both
- World uses its own logic allowing contradictions
 - Stealing can be right and wrong depending on context
 - Context depends on current morality {Relativism}

Jews Use Works to Condemn Him

- Jews claim His works *prove* He is not from God
 - Jesus often did His work on Sabbath
 - Their logic: God would allow suffering to uphold Sabbath (Man healed at Bethesda Pool) (Jn 5:1-17)
- Violates Law of Non-Contradiction
 - If His works are godly, how can they violate Sabbath?
 - If He is ungodly, how can Jesus do such works? (Satan)

Horns of a Dilemma

- If the Bible is true, as the Jews believe, they must accept its teachings of Messiah and Jesus as both Messiah and Prophet witnessed by His works and John Baptist
 - Yet, Jews reject Bible by ignoring its Messianic teachings
- Both claim the Scriptures: both cannot be true
 - LNC

What Does Bible Say?

- Moses says The Prophet will arise from Israel after him
- Prophets write:
 - Isaiah - Child will be born who will be called God and Son; His government will be eternal (Is 9:6-7)
 - Jeremiah - Messiah shall be from King David as a *righteous sprout* judging according to God's Spirit (Is 11:1-5; Jer 23:5)

Messiah as Judge

- Prophets depict Messiah as Judge [Inherent in ruler]
 - Isaiah: "His government" implies eternal governance
 - Jeremiah: *His authority* comes from David via the Spirit
(Mt 1:1-17; Lk 3:23-38)
- Jesus establishes basis of His judgment - Eye witness
 - He speaks what the Father reveals to Him (Prophet)
 - Consistent with Biblical truth as anyone can read

Messiah Crushes Their Defense

- Messiah tells them the Scriptures they rely on for their defense are the very means that condemns them
- How do they misinterpret the Scriptures so egregiously
 - They value the *glory* of men agreeing with them above God's truth preferring piety over repentance
 - They see themselves as righteous by keeping the Law, though the Law condemns them {Violates LNC} (Rc 1:30-38)

Moses Crushes Their Defense

- Christ will not be their accuser
 - Moses on whom they rely will accuse them because they had his writings and misused them to prove their own righteousness rather than repent (Rc 1:7-13)
 - Their own works will condemn them at the Judgment (Rc 20:11-15)
- Thus, the Scriptures they reject will be the measure by which their works are judged and found wanting

Jews Trusted Talmud More

- Jews placed little value on Scripture valuing their own musings more: Talmud, Mishna, Midrash
 - Malachi revealed how little they revered God
 - Thus, Christ's appeal to Scripture fell on deaf ears
 - They did not fear eternal death (Lake of Fire) but wanted to befriend then defeat the flesh (1Co. 1:27-29)
- Even believers struggled to accept the Scriptures (1A 24:25-27)

Christ Reveals Their Calumny

- They *said* they trusted in Moses' and the Prophets when actually they misused the Bible to reject Messiah
 - If they reject the Scriptures, which came from God, they cannot believe Jesus' words which also come from God
 - Their defense reveals their agenda: condemn Jesus as unrighteous to establish themselves as righteous; means rejecting the Bible though it is the basis for their charge (LNC)

This Pattern Will Repeat Itself

- John will present several dialogues between Messiah and the Jews revealing their rejection of Scriptures all the while claiming to live by them - Piety
- Their low view of Scripture determines their low view of Jesus' words, His witnesses and rejection of God
 - John Baptist - Killed (Mt 14:1-12)
 - Works - Power of Beelzebul (Lucifer) (Mt 12:22-30)

Their Hypocrisy Revealed

- In the Rich man and Lazarus, Christ revealed how little they trusted the Scriptures they claim to love (Lk 16:19-31)
 - Rich man in Hell asks Abraham to send Lazarus to warn his brothers of Hell
 - Abraham replies they have Moses and the Prophets
 - Rich man says they do not believe Moses and Prophets
 - Abraham says neither will they believe in a resurrection

Apologetics Does Not Save

- Christ the perfect apologist [Defender of the faith]
 - He revealed that they rejected His three witnesses
 - They rejected the healing of the man at Bethesda Pool
 - They will continue to reject His truths
 - They claim to follow the Scriptures by keeping the Sabbath and the Law - Piety [Blindness of sin]
 - Christ living example of keeping the Law - Humility

Same Mindset Exists Today

- People not saved by
 - Logical arguments though their worldview is destroyed
 - Scriptures which are rejected for empty philosophies
- People substitute their own truths, changing the context to justify themselves (Isa. 1:18-21)
- They attack those who bring the truth, even you (1Pt 4:12-17)