

**John 5.31-47**  
**Where There Are Two Or More Witnesses...**

**Aim:** to see, believe and savor the truthfulness of the testimonies regarding Jesus Christ!

**Scripture Reading:** John 5.31-47

**INTRODUCTION:**

There's been a crime committed. One individual has been ascertained and is currently under questioning regarding the accusation of another person.

The person under question gives his testimony that he is innocent of the charges, but has no other witnesses other than himself. It's his word against the other person's word. How confident would you be in that one person's testimony of himself?

Ok, same scenario, the person under question gives his testimony that he is innocent of the charges, but this time there is another witness who is unknown to him that backs up his story. How confident now would you be in the one person's testimony?

Ok, same scenario, the person under question gives his testimony that he is innocent of the charges, but this time there are two other witnesses who are unknown to him that backs up his story of innocence. How confident now would you be in the one person's testimony?

Ok, same scenario, the person under question gives his testimony that he is innocent of the charges, but this time there are three other witnesses who are unknown to him that backs up his story of innocence. How confident now would you be in the one person's testimony?

Ok, one more, same scenario, but the person under question gives his testimony that he is innocent of the charges, but this time there are four other witnesses who are unknown to him that backs up his story of innocence. How confident now would you be in the one person's testimony?

According to Jewish history it was an absolute to have multiple witnesses before someone could be accused of a crime or offense.

**Deuteronomy 19.14-21** A single witness shall not rise up against a man on account of any iniquity or any sin which he has committed; on the evidence of two or three witnesses a matter shall be confirmed. “If a malicious witness rises up against a man to accuse him of wrongdoing, then both the men who have the dispute shall stand before the LORD, before the priests and the judges who will be in office in those days. “The judges shall investigate thoroughly, and if the witness is a false witness and he has accused his brother falsely, then you shall do to him just as he had intended to do to his brother. Thus you shall purge the evil from among you. “The rest will hear and be afraid, and will never again do such an evil thing among you. “Thus you shall not show pity: life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot.”

So how seriously does God take giving a truthful witness of something?

Very seriously. Even so seriously that He would apply whatever is being falsely accused to the one who is falsely accusing. That should cause us all to take what we say against someone extremely seriously.

Now this may surprise you, but in today’s passage even Jesus considers the same law for Himself. He too will tell the crowd that there must be more than merely His lone **testimony** of Himself in order for His **testimony** to be considered true. So what we will beautifully see from Jesus is His own submission to His own law that He gave to His people Israel.

So if Jesus submits to His own law, then what do you think would be required of us? How many witnesses and **testimonies** do you think Jesus tells the hostile crowd that is given regarding His claim to deity?

But why do we need **testimonies** anyway? To help us believe what is **true!**

Let’s read the truth together...**John 5.31-47**

**Title:** Where There Are Two Or More Witnesses...

**Aim:** to see, believe and savor the truthfulness of the testimonies regarding Jesus Christ!

## The Testimony Of Jesus (v.31-32)

**“If I alone testify about Myself, My testimony is not true. There is another who testifies of Me, and I know that the testimony which He gives about Me is true.”**

Now you all know by now what the word **testify** means. It means to bear witness or to give witness of something you have experienced or seen. But how does this **testifying** regarding Jesus’ **testimony** of Himself teach us about Jesus’ relationship to His **Father**? Well, all over **John 5** we have been learning that Jesus does nothing apart from what He hears **the Father** say and from what He sees **the Father** do. So all of Jesus’ **testimony** regarding Himself is what He witnesses from **the Father** and experiences in His union with **the Father** even about Himself.

As we close out **chapter 5** today, we must keep the context and the situation of what is going on in mind. Jesus healed the paralytic man on the Sabbath and commanded him to take up his pallet and walk. According to the Jews’ manmade traditions and laws it was forbidden for a man to pick up anything on the Sabbath. So both the man along with Jesus had broken their Sabbath law.

Jesus went further to say that His Father was working until now and He Himself was working, thus making Himself out to be one and equal with God. The Jews sought all the more to kill Jesus for His blasphemy.

So now at this time, there is a hostile crowd that Jesus is speaking to and He tells them of His unique oneness with God **the Father**. I do nothing apart from what I see **the Father** doing. **The Father** and the Son have this unique relationship that the Son does the works of His **Father**, so that all will marvel at the Son. **The Father** raises the dead and gives them life, so does the Son, so that all will honor the Son even as they honor **the Father**. Therefore he who hears My word and believes Him who sent Me has eternal life.

Jesus goes on to teach them that He will resurrect the spiritually dead and then all the physically dead will be resurrected. Those who did good to life and those who did evil to judgment. So you can now almost imagine the crowd saying to Jesus, “Prove it, prove it. Prove who You are!”

So in **verses 31-47** this is what Jesus does. He proves it! He proves His deity. He proves His oneness with God **the Father**. And in **verses 31-32** he freely admits that if He **alone testified about Himself His testimony would be untrue**. Not because it is not true, but because we all know that you cannot be very confident in only one person’s **testimony**. Thus, Jesus being the God-Man, submits Himself yet again to humanity and even to the commonsense law that there must be multiple witnesses who will give a true **testimony**.

So Jesus makes the claim in **verse 32** that all He does is then the witness and **testimony of the Father**, which Jesus Himself does not deny, but knows to be **true**. Nevertheless, Jesus submits Himself and gives the crowd 4 sources that give **testimony** to who He is. The first is **John** the Baptist.

### **The Testimony Of John** (v.33-35)

**“You have sent to John, and he has testified to the truth. But the testimony which I receive is not from man, but I say these things, so that you may be saved. He was the lamp that was burning and was shining and you were willing to rejoice for a while in his light.”**

If you remember back in **John 1.19** the Jews **sent to John** the Baptist priests and Levites to ask him who he was and John declared that he “was not the Christ; not Elijah, not the Prophet, but the voice of one crying in the wilderness, make straight the way of the LORD.” **John** the Baptist would later **testify** of Jesus that He was “the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world! The One who comes has a higher rank than I, for He existed before Me.” **John** would also **testify** that “He saw the Spirit descending as a dove out of heaven, and He remained upon Jesus. I myself have seen, and have **testified** that this is the Son of God.”

Jesus tells the crowd of Jews that they themselves **sent to John and John testified to the truth**. All that **John testified** of Jesus was **true**. Jesus would also tell them that the **testimony** He **receives is not from man** or from John, but Jesus **says these things** to them **so that they may be saved**.” Jesus gives them other **testimonies so that they may be saved**.

But Jesus Himself doesn't need a human **testimony** to **testify** of His **true** divine nature. The extra **testimony** is given to them, to the Jews, **so that they may be believe and be saved**. This was the whole point of **John** the Baptist's ministry. To be the forerunner of Jesus Christ preparing the way of the Lord, so that all who would behold the Son of God might believe in Him.

Jesus then **testifies** of **John** the Baptist in **verse 35** when Jesus says, **“he was the light that was burning and was shining and you were willing to rejoice for a while in his light.”** This here is both an incredible **testimony** of **John** and at the same time a harsh rebuke of those who were listening to Jesus. Jesus said that **John** the Baptist **burned and shined as a lamp** of The Light of the world for Christ. He was used by God to **light up** the world of darkness to the **truth** of who Jesus was. His **light** and **testimony** were **true**.

But in the same breath, Jesus rebukes the Jews and says that they **were willing to rejoice for a while in John's light**. The phrase **'a while'** can mean *an hour*. They **rejoiced** in **John's testimony** of **light** regarding Jesus for *an hour*. Their excitement and enjoyment of **John's light** revealing Jesus, flickered out quickly. Which means they didn't really **rejoice** at all in **John's testimony** about Jesus.

There are those who hear the truth regarding Jesus and their **rejoicing** lasts about as long as a spark. The deception of their flesh and of the enemy lasts longer than the spark, because these same people who do not **rejoice** any longer in the **light** of Christ, still think they have that spark within them. The **truth** is they never really **rejoiced** in the **light** of Christ at all. They never really were set aflame in their hearts for Christ. They never really **burned** at all in their love for Jesus as the Son of God, who is the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world.

They are **light-less** people in regards to Jesus and the **testimony** of who Jesus is. So because of the lack of their rejoicing the Jews here actually rejected **John's true testimony**. But is there another **testimony** of Christ?

### **The Testimony Of Jesus' Works** (v.36)

**“But the testimony which I have is greater than the testimony of John; for the works which the Father has given Me to accomplish—the very works that I do—testify about Me, that the Father has sent Me.”**

Jesus now reminds the people that all **the works** that He has been doing are **the very works that the Father has given Him to accomplish** and these **testify** about Him **that the Father has sent Him** to the world. The Apostle John also makes this very clear.

**John 20.30-31 “Therefore many other signs Jesus also performed in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; but these have been written, so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name.”**

The **works** or signs that Jesus was doing among the people clearly **testified** about Him and that **the Father had sent Him**. I want us to see many of the the **works** and teachings regarding Jesus that we have studied so far in the gospel of John...

He is the eternal Word. He was with God and is God. In Him is life. He is the Light that enlightens every man. The world was made through Him. He came to His own. He became flesh and dwelt among the people. He is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. He saw and knew Nathaniel under the fig tree. He turned water to wine in Cana. He cleansed the temple. He knows the intimate details of the Samaritan woman's life. He gives her living, eternal water. He then reaps a harvest as the Samaritans come out to Him and believe in Him. He heals the nobleman's son by the power of His word and his whole household believed. He heals the paralytic man. Jesus then teaches of the true nature that exists between the Father and the Son and that He is the One who gives resurrection life and the One who judges.

These **works** made up of signs, teachings, and divine knowledge all give **true** witness and **testimony** of what Jesus is doing and that He is indeed from **the Father** and **that the Father has sent Him**.

Jesus says, “**the Father has given Him works to accomplish**” and many of those have already been completed and we know that many are still to come. Especially “the work of redemption, achieved in the cross and exaltation of the Lamb of God. The **works** He does are thus peculiarly divine: they are the **works** of God. So once this **Father/Son** relationship is grasped, everything Jesus does simultaneously attests to who He is and who **the Father** is.” (D.A. Carson)

So all of these **works** that Jesus is doing absolutely **testify** that Jesus is uniquely God-Man. He is one with **the Father** and everyone can and should believe that **He has been sent from the Father**.

J.C. Ryle tells us that we should always note of 5 things about our Lord’s miracles. (1) ***Their number***: they were not a few only, but very many indeed. (2) ***Their greatness***: they were not little, but mighty interferences with the ordinary course of nature. (3) ***Their publicity***: they were generally not done in a corner, but in open day, and before many witnesses, and often before enemies. (4) ***Their character***: they were almost always works of love, mercy, and compassion, helpful, and beneficial to man. (5) ***Their direct appeal to men’s senses***: they were visible, and would bear any examination. He calls them, “**The works that the Father has given Me to accomplish.**”

Folks, you should study them. You should meditate on them. You should wonder at them. You should be amazed and marvel at them. Why? So that you can study Christ! So that you can meditate on Christ! So that you can wonder at Christ! So that you can be amazed and marvel at Christ!

Oh, what an amazing God you have! He has done great things for us and we are filled with gladness and joy before Him!

So if **the Father** has given Jesus all these **works to accomplish** then it would be logical for **the Father** also to witness and **testify** of Jesus, right?

### **The Testimony Of The Father** (v.37-38)

**“And the Father who sent Me, He has testified of Me. You have neither heard His voice at any time nor seen His form. You do not have His word abiding in you, for you do not believe Him whom He sent.”**

So what is the **testimony** of **the Father** about Jesus?

J.C. Ryle says that there are two options in understanding what **the testimony of the Father** means. One, it is the audible **testimony** or verbal **testimony** borne to Him by **the Father** at His baptism, and at the transfiguration, when he said, “This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased, hear Him.” Or two, our Lord refers to the **testimony** of **the Father** that has borne to Him generally throughout the Old Testament Scriptures, and that the sentence before us should be taken in close connection with the next verse; **verse 38**. (Read)

But I’m with D.A. Carson and believe that **the testimony of the Father** could encompass all of **the Father’s** revealing work in redemption, in Scripture, in His voice at Jesus’ baptism/transfiguration, and even the internal witness of the Spirit in the life the believer.

But what is sad is that Jesus says that this hostile crowd does not receive the **testimony of the Father**. Jesus says in verse **37-38**, **“you have neither heard His voice at anytime, nor seen His form. You do not have His word abiding in you, for you do not believe Him whom He sent.”**



Since Jesus speaks **the words of the Father** and the Jews do not hear God's **voice** in Jesus, it follows that they are not true followers of **the Father**. Also, Jesus says that they have **never seen His form**, well since Jesus is the very manifestation of God and the Jews do not see God in Jesus, it follows that they are not true followers of the Father. Philip in **John 14** asks Jesus to show them **the Father** and Jesus basically says, **He who sees Me has seen the Father**. One more in **verse 38**, **you do not have His word abiding in you**, since Jesus is the very **word of God**, and the Jews have no time for Him, it follows that they do not share in the experience of nor the blessings of **abiding in God's word**. (D.A. Carson)

Hearing the **voice of God**, seeing **the form of God**, and **abiding in God** is all **heard, seen and lived** how? By **believing Him (Jesus) whom God sent (v.38)**

**Hebrews 1.1 "God after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways, in these last days has spoken to us in His Son.**

If you hear Jesus; you hear God! If you see Jesus; you see God! If you abide in Jesus; you abide in God! So why is it so important for us to pray and for us to make sure that we help everyone see Jesus? Because if you do not hear Jesus and His word, you miss God altogether. If you do not see Jesus and His life and ministry, you miss God altogether. If you do not abide in Jesus and live in Him and hide yourself in Him, you miss God altogether. Once again, "there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must be saved." (Acts 4.12)

Jesus makes all the difference between those who hear, see and live with God and those who do not. And this hostile crowd surrounding Jesus cannot hear, cannot see, and does not abide in God.

Jesus gives them one more source that bears witness and testimony of who He is.

## **The Testimony Of Scripture** (v.39-47)

(Read)

Jesus here in the last section of **John 5** tells the crowd that they indeed search **the Scriptures**, but that their **searching** is actually in futility. They were searching the Scriptures to find and discover eternal life, but they would not look to the One whom the Scriptures were speaking of.

Over the last couple of months we've had the privilege of having our new friend Kathir from India gather with us each week. He is a co-worker of Robert and has really enjoyed gathering with us. Just this last week Robert bought Kathir a bible. Robert sat down with Kathir and read him from the beginning of Genesis and read to him the end of Revelation and Robert then said this to Kathir...everything between the beginning of Genesis and the end of Revelation is all about Jesus!

You see some of those in the crowd after Jesus were the Pharisees and it's been said that "they were fanatical in their preoccupation with Scripture, studying every line, every word, and even the letters in an empty effort to understand the truth." (MacArthur) You see it is these very **Scriptures that testify about Jesus** (from Genesis through Revelation) and Jesus says to them that those who **search them are unwilling to come to Him so that they may have life.**

There is no **eternal life** without **coming** to Jesus. You cannot reject Jesus and have **eternal life**, no matter how much you study **the Scriptures**. Because all of **the Scriptures, testify about Jesus.**

One of the things that I really appreciate about John Gill, who was an English pastor in the 1700's and also pastored the church that merged with another church that would later become Metropolitan Tabernacle...you know Spurgeon's church, in Gills commentary on the whole bible this brother literally finds Jesus in every thing, both Old and New Testaments. I have seen much more of Jesus in Scripture from his written ministry and I'm so thankful for it. We should all pray before reading and studying **Scripture** for the Holy Spirit to show us Jesus!

Folks, it is **the Scriptures that testify about Jesus**. And it is in **the Scriptures that testify about Jesus where you find eternal life**. Listen, I want to go to **the Scriptures** as often as I can and as necessary as I should to see Christ, to see Jesus, to hear Jesus, to believe in Jesus, to see **the Father**, to hear **the Father**, and to believe in **the Father**.

Jesus' **glory does not come from men**, whether they praise Him or persecute Him, His **glory** is neither gained nor robbed **by men**. Jesus was glorious before these men and Jesus is and will be forever glorious after these men. He gains or loses nothing from men.

But Jesus knows what's in the hearts of these people around Him. And He knows (v.42) **that the love of God is not in them**. The evidence is (v.43) that they **do not receive the Father's Son**, so how could they have **the love of the Father in them**? Jesus knowing their hearts would even go so far as to tell them at the end of (v.43) if another comes in his own name, you will receive him. What an indictment against these people. They would be so gullible to receive a false messiah and many other false messiahs, but fail to receive the true Messiah.

But read with me **verse 44**. The Jews had fixed themselves on **believing** in their own messiah, if that messiah brought them praise and **glory**. Watch this...they wanted to be flattered by the messiah. They wanted to share in the **glory** with the messiah from the people. As the people would praise and **glorify** the messiah, they too wanted to stand shoulder to shoulder and **receive glory from one another** as the messiah would **receive glory** from them.

**John 12.43 “for they loved the glory of men rather than the glory of God.”**

So why didn't they **believe**? Because they were seeking their own **glory** from men rather than giving **glory** to God.

So what does Jesus say to them now? **(Read verses 45-47)**

**The very one whom they had set their hope would accuse them; Moses!** Why? Because **Moses** wrote about Jesus. All of the books of the Law/the Pentateuch pointed to Jesus!

**Deuteronomy 18.15 “The LORD your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among your countrymen, you shall listen to him.”**

So to not **believe Moses** is equal to not **believing** Jesus, for **Moses** wrote about Jesus.

So Robert is correct! All of **Scripture**, including **Moses**, the prophets, the gospels, the epistles, and I even at times want to believe the maps are all about Jesus. It all points, aims, reveals, exclaims, extols, exalts, heralds, and preaches Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God, whom the Father has sent to us.

So Jesus would end chapter 5 by saying, if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe My words? If you do not believe Moses, or really any all of the Scriptures regarding Jesus, then how will you ever believe His words?

Folks, the Scriptures testify about Jesus. The Father testifies about Jesus. The works of Jesus testify about Jesus. John the Baptist testifies about Jesus. Even Jesus’ own testimony testifies about Jesus.

With all this testimony, why don’t you believe? Why don’t you believe in greater ways? In deeper ways? With all this testimony about Jesus why wouldn’t want to go and search the Scripture and find Him and find eternal life?

Why are you wasting your life and your time, but searching everything else, but these testimonies of Christ, the Son of God, who is the Son of Man who has come to take away the sin of the world and give you eternal life in Himself?

### **CONCLUSION:**

Do we believe the **testimony** of Jesus/John/Jesus’ works/the Father/the Scriptures? Is Jesus true? Is Jesus from **the Father**? Is Jesus God? Is Jesus the Messiah? Should you go to Jesus and have life from Him and in Him?

The courtroom is filled with witness after witness and guess what? Their **testimony** is true! Jesus has life in Himself and gives life to whomever He wishes and **the Father** has given Him authority to execute judgment because He is the Son of Man. Don’t reject Him any longer! Jesus is granting you life today...believe in Him!