

John 5:31-47**I. Introduction: Biblical Context/Historical Background**

There are times in our lives when controversy will arise even after you have made it known by facts that you are telling the truth. John wrote this Gospel to meet the spiritual need of a church that had little background in the OT and that may have been endangered by contention. John is a witness as all these things were written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name. This is the essence of the Gospel as witnessed by John the Baptist so that you may believe! The 21 chapters are written to convince us that Jesus was supernatural in his origin, powers, authority and goal and of his imminent return. Specifically chapters 1-5 marks a self-affirmation to how testimony is imperative. Here, we see the confidence of a man on a mission commissioned by the Father, not with arrogance of self-assertion, but that he was sent. Even so we are sent in the same way by Jesus as he was sent by the Father to a witness, a testifier so others may believe!!

The biblical context/historical background thus far boldly has us seeing Jesus’ response in the beginning of his ministry (the reception of the Word, the first disciples, signs and even interviews with Nicodemus, testimony of John, the Samaritan Woman, the paralytic, and the remarks of the Samaritans and Jesus bold affirmation of his authority). OMG! All of this and still there is controversy!! Well, truth speaks to power even more (5:1-30) – he claims equality with God in judgement, honor, eternal life, self-existent life, death and destiny and justice! Wow, this is authority! What a man of God-true to his godly mission and commission. An all-inclusive statement of the wicked to eternal punishment and the righteous to eternal life. Wow, we are just on chapter 5, our eyes should be wide-open that Jesus bears witness along with even greater witnesses than John.

II. One Who Believes The Word will be Saved!

Here JESUS speaks boldly more than ever in John 5:31-47: YOU MUST BELIEVE!! Jesus claims a 4-fold witness: John the Baptist; His own words; the Father; the Scriptures, on top of all that he foretells His rejection and still tells us to **BELIEVE!** It’s valid, Jesus is Lord!

FOUR REVELATIONS.**A. FIRST REVELATION: BELIEVE IN JOHN THE BAPTIST AS A WITNESS**

John 5:31-35:³¹ “If I testify about myself, my testimony is not true.³² There is another who testifies in my favor, and I know that his testimony about me is true.³³ “You have sent to John and he has testified to the truth.³⁴ Not that I accept human testimony; but I mention it that you may be saved.³⁵ John was a lamp that burned and gave light, and you chose for a time to enjoy his light.

Jesus has critics as we all have and are going to have and we as disciples are not without controversy. We need witnesses to vouch for us. Witness or testimony, whether verb or noun is a common word in this Gospel occurs 33 times. Here it is used to describe and attest to Jesus’ character

and power. He is a confident man without a doubt and discount his own witness and still he implies that it is not valid enough! Jewish law states self-testimony of any man was not accepted in court. Even, later, in 8:14, if I did testify on my own, I know where I came from and where I am going. These are legal grounds, but is based on personal knowledge. In other words, his witness concerning himself is sound, though in legal process it would not be admitted. You and I are burning lamps to give light and to enjoy that light!

Notice: witness, testimony, testifies, testified, valid

Jesus knows another who testifies (vs. 32) is John the witness, a true witness. If I am the only one that is legally true and acceptable but there is another witness, and that is God and the works which are greater witnesses than John. He is a prophet and cannot lie, so why not believe what he said of Me? Jesus was constantly conscious of the Father's confident and support!!!

1. **vv. 33-34:** You have sent to John a delegation from the Jewish rulers to John, and you have already asked him for an explanation. He refused to say he is the Messiah and predicted the coming of Jesus. So John's testimony was effective, his preaching reached a wide audience and prepared the way for further revelation of truth. What a strong appeal Jesus is making. They could not consistently accept John's preaching and reject Jesus!
2. **v: 35.** John introduced Jesus to the public and disciples as the Lamb of God and the Son of God. He spoke truth to power and now Jesus is saying, I am standing before you, what more do you want? John has practically worn himself out – burn out, imprisoned! Jesus is adamantly and honestly speaking of John...you have enjoyed him and responded to him, but it looks like its short lived and superficial...you are paying scant attention to me...OMG! Believe in the witness of John The Baptist!

B. SECOND REVELATION: BELIEVE THE WORKS JESUS HAS DONE

3. **v. 36.** **“I have testimony weightier than that of John. For the works that the Father has given me to finish—the very works that I am doing—testify that the Father has sent me.**

Works refers to those deeds that revealed Jesus' divine nature. The quality of your deeds shows your moral standards, skill and personal competence, so Jesus' works marked him as superhuman in both his compassion and his power. He is saying **believe** in him on the evidence of the miracles themselves. Although he never performed miracles for the purpose of drawing attention to himself, but these are valid proofs of his claims..... (Water into wine 2:1-11; healing of the official's son 4:43-54); healing of the paralytic-5:1-15). These are signs because they point to something beyond themselves—but because Jesus was able to meet the emergencies of life directly and satisfactorily and then of note, all were followed by a confession of **belief** on the part of the spectators.

Miracles are extraordinary works of God, all designed, described, done, distributed, and divided by God in nature, humanity and YOU!. There will always be deniers of miracles and like the poor will always be with us. In God's way, he is strong, almighty, Creator of Man, and is sovereign. What is the

use of authority without power! Jesus is speaking so many will be saved. This was predicted in the OT (see Is. 35: 5, 6). **Believe in the works!**

C. THIRD REVELATION: BELIEVE WHAT THE FATHER HAS DONE!

4. **vv. 37-38: And the Father who sent me has himself testified concerning me. You have never heard his voice nor seen his form,³⁸ nor does his word dwell in you, for you do not believe the one he sent.**

The witness of the Father is distinguished from the works that the Father gave Jesus to perform. There were on occasions on which a voice from heaven spoke, expressing approval of Jesus and affirmation. The voice at the baptism and utterance at the Transfiguration are recorded only by the Synoptic Gospels in Mat. Mk., Luke and John. (Meaning NT Scriptures in the Gospels). To a Jew, the voice from heaven would have meant the approval of God; yet this seems to have had little effect on the multitude. Jesus implies that his hearers did not apprehend the revelation of God because they had not believed him who the Father had sent. Openness of belief must precede the reception of truth. In other words, can you hear me now?

Jesus considered the “works” he performed to be one of the strongest witnesses to his claims, these were not abnormal activities or special occasional miracles, signs, or wonders, rather the usual mode of his activity when confronting a challenging situation, because of this, the witness is doubly strong, for the works reveal the normal powers he exercised when they were needed. It’s the works that Father gave me to complete is what Jesus is saying, to confirm the fact that the Father sent me. You missed the mark! You never heard his voice, you never saw his appearance. There is nothing left in you because you do not take his Messenger seriously. **Believe what the Father has done!**

D. FOURTH REVELATION: BELIEVE THE SCRIPTURES!

5. **vv. 39-42: You study the Scriptures diligently because you think that in them you have eternal life. These are the very Scriptures that testify about me,⁴⁰ yet you refuse to come to me to have life.⁴¹ “I do not accept glory from human beings,⁴² but I know you. I know that you do not have the love of God in your hearts.**

Jesus boldly states that there is another direct testimony of Me that you can know; that is, if you will search the Scriptures. There you think you have eternal life and they even testify of me. And yet, you will not come to me, that you might have life. I don’t get honor from men, but I **know** you, that you have not the love of God in you!! There goes the confidence of this mighty man of God! Jesus was stating a fact, not giving a command. After the destruction of the temple of Solomon, the Jewish scholars substituted the study of the Law for the observance of the temple ritual and sacrifices. They pored over the OT, endeavoring to extract the fullest possible meaning from its words, because they believed the very study itself would bring them life! But they got it twisted!! Moreover, they missed that it was Jesus who was the chief subject of the OT revelation – the Law, the Prophets, and the Psalms were all witnesses to his person and claims!! Again, let’s not get it twisted, a mere quoting of Scriptures

or rituals does not make the person...you must believe!! Jesus rebuked hearers for their inconsistency in studying the Scriptures while rejecting his claims which were found on those same Scriptures. The love of God here is not love from God but love **for** God. Since God loves us, we should love Him (Deut. 6:5; 1 John 4:19).

Jesus' statement reveals his attitude toward the OT and NT, as they all go together. He accepted its divine authority, not only that but its accuracy, but he also took its principles and predictions written in the Scripture as a guide for his attitude and career. (John 3:14-15, 12:14-15; 18:9; 19:24 are all a forefront of his thinking). Scriptures are so designed that when people read them, they are to recognize and acknowledge God's glory. They should have known this as they spoke of him...they were just spiritually unable to make the connection between the Scriptures and the Savior!! No surprise to Jesus...because He "knows" you and me. Jesus does not respond solely on the basis of external circumstances (degrees, position or status, much studying)...outward signs are of short duration!! Stop faking and be for real, for real...you can't fool Jesus...He knows YOU. **Believe the Scriptures!**

III. CONCLUSION: BELIEVE ME...I HAVE COME IN MY FATHER'S NAME!

6. **vv. 43-47: I have come in my Father's name, and you do not accept me; but if someone else comes in his own name, you will accept him.** ⁴⁴ How can you believe since you accept glory from one another but do not seek the glory that comes from the only God ¹? ⁴⁵ "But do not think I will accuse you before the Father. Your accuser is Moses, on whom your hopes are set. ⁴⁶ If you believed Moses, you would believe me, for he wrote about me. ⁴⁷ But since you do not believe what he wrote, how are you going to believe what I say?"

Jesus expresses disappointment because the people would not accept his credentials (from John the Baptist, the Works, the Scriptures) though they would accept the personal claims of another! Jesus is not representing Caesar or Zeus or even himself (v43). We are more apt to receive other men than they are to receive one who comes in the name of God. Barabbas over Jesus! Judas over Jesus! No! No! We should rebuke students of the Scriptures who profess scholarships rather than obeying the revelation of God so as to bring approval!! Jesus came in the Father's name, revealing God to the people, but they reject Him, if someone comes in their own name in harmony with people's ideas, the people would have received (vs.44). There are folks that did not believe in Jesus because they did not seek honor that comes from the only God. That kind of godly honor is similar to Paul's view of the glory that will be revealed in us in the presence of God. (Rom.8:18).

(vs.45) Christ will not have to accuse the people on Judgment Day because the one in whom they placed their hope, Moses, will. The people will be condemned by the very Law they professed to keep. Moses wrote about Christ in the promise to the patriarchs, the history of Egyptian deliverance, the predictions, the Prophets, if only they have believed Moses, they would have received Jesus! If you really believed Moses, you would believe me. He wrote of me. Take me seriously! If you reject Moses, you reject me...Jesus. No wonder they disliked Jesus, he was always one up...they go low, he goes even higher! What do you believe---**Believe John! Believe the works! Believe the Father! Believe the Scriptures! Believe Jesus at His Word!**