

The Gospel of John

Chapter 5:31-47

March 16, 1997

- **The Gospel of John Outline:**

- Chapter 1 Our Lord is the Word, the Light and the Life
- Chapter 2 The Lord of the Wedding Feast; Zeal for the purity of the temple
- Chapter 3 Spiritual Birth, Belief and Salvation vs. Unbelief and Condemnation
- Chapter 4 The Ministry in Samaria, The Harvest, The Faith of the Nobleman
- Chapter 5 Paralytic man healed on the Sabbath, Unity of The Father and Son

- **Review and Introduction**

This is the fourth week that we have been considering the words that our Lord spoke to the Jews who had become so angered with His healing on the Sabbath and His claims of equality with the Father. This chapter has been filled with explanations of Jesus' role as the incarnate Word which includes life-giver, judge, and resurrector. In this last section, Jesus explains the multiple witness that testify to who He is and what His purpose is.

- **Exposition**

John 5:31-47

31 "If I bear witness of Myself, My witness is not true.³² "There is another who bears witness of Me, and I know that the witness which He witnesses of Me is true."³³ "You have sent to John, and he has borne witness to the truth."³⁴ "Yet I do not receive testimony from man, but I say these things that you may be saved."³⁵ "He was the burning and shining lamp, and you were willing for a time to rejoice in his light.

- Although Christ's witness of Himself would be true, He defers to the rule that no man can be reckoned a fully truthful witness of himself (Deut 17:6). Even though it is ludicrous to lower Jesus to this standard, He gives up His right to rely on His testimony so that he might demonstrate that there are other testimonies worthy of belief.
- Just as the disciples were witnesses of Christ, so too we are witnesses of Christ (Acts 1:8). We have been sent into the world to be witnesses to the work already accomplished in Christ. Our Gospel is not a message necessarily about what Jesus is going to do, but rather is about His completed work and our response to His love for us.
- Christ acknowledges John's testimony but what does John's testimony add when Jesus has the testimony of Himself and the Father? What greater testimony will He need? It was more tangible for them to comprehend John's witness than it was for them to see God's. God provided John so that they might believe. God also provided John as a light. But they were blind. The warning to them is that if God has provided these advantages, beware lest you ignore them and they stand in condemnation of you.
- For a while, at least initially, they accepted what John had to say. But their hardness lead them to reject his message of repentance and preparation probably because John didn't reciprocate the honor.

36 "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."³⁷ "And the Father Himself, who sent Me, has testified of Me. You have neither heard His voice at any time, nor seen His form."³⁸ "But you do not have His word abiding in you, because whom He sent, Him you do not believe.

- The point of the miracles wasn't just to point out who the Son of God was but it was to take them further to the point where they must believe all that He says as well. The miracles were designed not only to identify Christ but to exalt Him as well, even above the prophets.
- Christ charges them with not really knowing the Father. There are many like that even today who believe that they are in the faith. But we are to examine ourselves to see if we truly are in the faith. Even though they were greatly religious men, their religion was of no benefit in true salvation. (2 Cor. 13:5, Matt 7:21-23)

39 "You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me."⁴⁰ "But you are not willing to come to Me that you may have life.

- The life that is in the Scriptures does not come from the manner of study but rather from the belief in its content. This is not a refutation of finding life in the Scriptures because Christ Himself is found in them and He holds the power of new life. The problem came from the fact that Pharisees were not seeking life by seeking Christ in the Scriptures. Given that they did not seek Christ (not some mystery religion) they could not find the life spoken of in the pages of Scripture.

41 "I do not receive honor from men.⁴² "But I know you, that you do not have the love of God in you.⁴³ "I have come in My Father's name, and you do not receive Me; if another comes in his own name, him you will receive.⁴⁴ "How can you believe, who receive honor from one another, and do not seek the honor that comes from the only God?

- All true glory from man is borrowed from God. All glory originating from man is not of God and therefore would be of no glory to Christ Himself. The only way that we may glorify God in truth is if He supplies the glory.
- The Pharisees trafficked in showing honor to one another for selfish gain. As with other things they sought the wrong things and found only the replica of true faith not the real substance of true belief.
- These various witnesses were provided by God so that the faithful might clearly know that Jesus was the Christ. There have been those who have come after our Lord (Muhammad, Joseph Smith) who have claimed to be the one who is to come after Christ. But we know that these men are false because there are none of the witnesses similar to those that testify to the authenticity of Christ.

45 "Do not think that I shall accuse you to the Father; there is one who accuses you—Moses, in whom you trust.⁴⁶ "For if you believed Moses, you would believe Me; for he wrote about Me.⁴⁷ "But if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe My words?" NKJV

- Although Jesus will truly judge all people, even the Jews, here He levels a charge at them that would have been devastating to them; Moses will be their accuser, not ally. They considered Moses to be the most central figure in the Scriptures because it was through Moses that the Law was given. The Pharisees believed that true life was found by observing the Law and missed the whole point that the Law was our tutor pointing the adolescent church to its need for grace.