

Testimony to the Deity of Christ, Part 1

Scripture: John 5:30–37

Code: 43-29

We're going to look at John 5 and there's enough left in John 5 to occupy us for a few weeks and then later on we'll come back and go into that just monumental sixth chapter of John which starts with the famous feeding of the five thousand men, plus women and children, and continue our study in John's gospel. But for now we want to wrap up this very powerful fifth chapter. And you know from what I've been telling you that starting in verse 17 and running all the way to the end, verse 47, this is one long discourse in which Jesus declares His deity. This is the whole point of this section, and frankly the whole point of the gospel of John, these are written, John says, that you might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God and that by believing you might have life in His name. That's John's own statement of why he wrote the gospel under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

So here you have really a high point in this gospel where Jesus declares His deity starting in verse 17 all the way to the end of this chapter. He'll do it again and again and again and again through John's gospel, but never in quite the extensive way and the unique way it is done here. So this has been really a very, very important and instructive portion of Scripture for us.

We also know that all the way through the gospel of John, while our Lord is declaring His deity and proving His deity, and demonstrating His deity, making the I AM claims, doing wondrous miracles that demonstrate His deity, the response is unbelief all the way through until the final end when the unbelief reaches its climactic point and they execute Him as a deceiver and a pretender and an agent of Satan. So running parallel is the demonstration of the deity of Jesus Christ and the increasing hostility and animosity of the people to whom He is making that unmistakable demonstration.

I think we are helped all the way along because there are continual references to their unbelief, and not just to their unbelief, but as to the reasons for their unbelief. And they frankly are not isolated to the Jewish people or the Jewish leaders but to whom Jesus is speaking particularly here, but they are a general diagnosis of the human race and the human condition. So we learn that Jesus is the Son of God, He is the only hope of salvation. We also learn how sinners respond to that truth even when it's demonstrated beyond doubt. They respond with unbelief and the reason is, because they are unwilling to come to the truth. That comes out in the section we're going to look at this morning. So let me start reading at verse 30, John chapter 5 verse 30, "I can do nothing on My own initiative. As I hear, I judge, and My judgment is just because I do not seek My own will but the will of Him who sent Me. 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. 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. 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. 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. You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have

eternal life. It is these that testify about Me and you are unwilling to come to Me so that you may have life.”

That last verse is what I want to begin to have you look at, “You are unwilling to come to Me so that you may have life.” Life is found in Jesus Christ and only in Jesus Christ. He is the way, the truth and the life. Whoever believes in Him will not perish but have everlasting life.” That is the message of the gospel over and over again. But the human response is locked down in that reference “you are unwilling to come to Me.” Just look at the word “unwilling.” You don’t want to come to Me. You do not have a desire to come to Me. This is the most foundational doctrine in the Bible, the most foundational doctrine in the Bible related to the gospel, related to salvation, related to mankind. It is the most distinctively biblical doctrine when it comes to humanity.

What is this doctrine I’m talking about? The unwillingness of the sinner to believe the truth even when faced with it. We know the Bible says that the unregenerate man is unable, that he is dead, that he is blind by the Fall, that he is double-blind by his sin, that he is triple-blinded by Satan and that he may even be judicially blinded by God who does not allow him to see. A man in the condition of being blinded on multiple levels and dead in trespasses and sins is unable to be saved. And furthermore he can’t make any contribution to his salvation, anymore as we saw in John 3 then a person can make a contribution to their existence, to their birth. We know the sinner’s inability.

But what is...the point here is the sinner’s unwillingness which is perhaps the clearest demonstration of the depth of sin, even when given full light, even when given complete evidence, even when all the testimony is in and incontrovertible the sinner is unwilling. He does not desire to come to Christ. He does not want to come to Christ. It is not true that if you can tell somebody the story of Christ, that person will want to come to Christ. That’s contrary to human nature. This is the most distinctive doctrine of man, his unwillingness to come even in the face of the truth. This is not a popular doctrine but it is the foundation of gospel orthodoxy. It is the foundation of Christianity. Sinful man is both unable to make any contribution to his salvation and unwilling at the same time to come to the only one who can save him. This is the condition of the unregenerate.

Just to expand that a little bit, turn to John chapter 8 and I’m going to make some theological points as we get started here, before we get in to the text. In John chapter 8 verse 43, Jesus expands on this issue of the sinner’s unwillingness, even in the face of evidence. “Why do you not understand what I am saying? Why do you not understand what I’m saying? It is because you cannot hear my Word. Why can you not hear My Word? You are of your father, the devil, and you want to do the desires of your father.”

This is the problem. You’re unwilling to come to Me because you want to do what Satan wants you to do, not what God wants you to do. I mean, this is the basis of what it means to be a fallen human being. You can make no contribution to your salvation, and furthermore, you are unwilling to come. You don’t want what God wants. You want what Satan wants. You are of your father, the devil, and you want to do the desires of your father. Verse 45, “Therefore because I speak the truth, you do not believe Me.” You do not believe Me. Verse 47, “He who is of God hears the words of God, you’re of the devil, for this reason you do not hear them because you’re not of God.” To which they responded to Jesus, “You have a demon.” Just the reverse of the truth.

Why do people not believe? Because they are unwilling. Why are they unwilling? Because they will to do the desires of the one in whose hands they are held. They are literally captive to the prince of

the power of the air, Paul says in Ephesians 2.

Now let me show you how profound this is. Turn to chapter 12...chapter 12 of John's gospel, just continuing to make this point about the unwillingness of the sinner. Verse 37, verse 37, John 12, "But though He had performed so many signs, miracles, before them, yet they were not believing in Him." They were believing superficially, we saw that in chapter 2. They believed He was a prophet sent from God because there was no way to explain away the miracles. But as far as believing in Him as the light, and becoming sons of light, which is the previous context, no. They were not believing in Him. This was to fulfill the word of Isaiah the prophet which he spoke, this is Isaiah 53:1, "Lord who has believed our report and to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed." For this reason, they could not believe. They would not believe so they could not believe.

Why would they not believe? Because they desired to do what the devil wants them to do, not what God wants them to do. And they made the choice not to believe and then they could not believe, God's judgment falls upon them. Isaiah says, "He has blinded their eyes, hardened their heart so that they would not see with their eyes, perceive with their heart and be converted and I heal them, They would not believe, Isaiah 53, so they could not believe, Isaiah 6. This is the issue with all fallen human beings. They are so profoundly under the power of the prince of the air, so much do they belong to the kingdom of darkness, so captive are they to their father, the devil, that they don't believe because they will not believe. It is unwillingness...unwillingness. That is the foundation of Christian orthodoxy. That is the first principle of gospel theology. Then we have to talk about how does God change that unwillingness? How does God break in? Because the Old Testament says that the sinner can be made willing in the day of his power. But that's the issue.

So, in the face of this amazing, consistent, incontrovertible, clear evidence that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, the Christ, the Savior of the world, in the face of all of this, they are unwilling to believe because that is the normal human condition.

They're not just unwilling, however, they are, as we saw in reading 1 Peter 4, they are hostile so that in this fifth chapter, while Jesus is declaring His deity, and demonstrating His deity, their reaction, consistent with their unbelief, verse 16, is they begin persecuting Jesus. And then verse 18, they're seeking all the more to murder Him. So this is not a kind of an indifferent unwillingness, this is an aggressively hostile unwillingness. And I think we have to understand that, that the sinner is not only incapable of believing, but unwilling to believe...and not just sort of passively unwilling, but angrily and hostilely unwilling. Overwhelming evidence had been presented to these particular Jews by the very one who was in their presence and speaking to them, none other than the incarnate Son of God, they refused to believe. Unbelief, listen to me, is never due to a lack of evidence, it's never due to a lack of evidence. The testimony is clear...the testimony is clear. The Holy Scripture embodies that testimony. It is never due to God's choosing people for hell. Nothing in the Bible holds God responsible for people's unbelief. It is not because of some double decree on God's part, it is not because of some lack of evidence, it is not because of an insufficient provision as if the sacrifice of Christ was insufficient, always in the Bible condemnation comes to those who will not believe.

Now I understand the profound depth of that reality, but that's still where the responsibility lies. So what does the sinner do? When the sinner is convicted of sin and exposed to the truth, the sinner has one option and that is to cry out to God to plead for faith to believe which is a gift from God, not of works. The sinner's only hope is to cry out to God in penitence and fear and desire for holiness in heaven and ask God to grant a willingness to an otherwise unwilling heart. Unbelief is never due to

a lack of evidence.

Back in John 3 where you have the wonderful gospel verse, “God so loved the world He gave His only begotten Son that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life,” you have the breadth of the gospel, you also have the responsibility on the sinner to believe. Whoever believes has eternal life, has nothing to do with the decree of God, it has to do with the sinner’s willingness to believe. Verse 18, “He who believes is not judged because he’s believed in the name of the only begotten Son of god,” but here’s the judgment, “That the light has come into the world,” the light meaning Christ. “And men love the darkness rather than the light for their deeds were evil and therefore they hate the light. That’s the problem. The light is clear. The truth is evident. But men love darkness, they love sin, they desire to do what the devil wants them to do, not what God wants them to do. That is the universal human condition and it is a profound unwillingness that runs deep into the human mind and heart.

Now along the way in the gospel of John, we keep seeing this unbelief. But there are points of light, aren’t there? There were those early followers of John the Baptist, the first little group of disciples in chapter 1 who believed and acknowledged that Jesus was the Messiah. There were the Samaritans in the village of Sychar who said He’s the Savior of the world and embraced Him as their Savior as well. There was the nobleman whose child was healed by Jesus and his household who believed. So we see evidences of times and places where people believed. The general flow is going to fulfill John chapter 1, “He was in the world, the world was made by Him, the world knew Him not. He came to His own, His own received Him not. But to as many as received Him, He gave the authority to become children of God.”

The nation rejected Him as a nation. They were hostile to Him. They followed their corrupt religious leaders in screaming for His blood. They pursued Him, they hounded Him all the way to the cross, the people following. Their rejection is obviously known by all.

Just to say this by way of reminder. There’s no middle ground with Jesus, you either accept Him as the Son of God, the Messiah, the Savior, the Lord, or you reject Him. That’s it! There’s no middle ground. Jesus said, “He that is not with Me is against Me.” You can’t take a neutral position toward Jesus. You can’t take an indifferent posture toward Jesus. You confess Him as Lord and God, or you’re against Him. and He is against you.

So our blessed Savior has given ample evidence of His deity and the result is they have rejected Him. Now you remember how chapter 5 started? Jesus went to the pool of Bethesda, a little watering hole, swimming pool in the city of Jerusalem. There were a lot of people who were sick who would gather around that pool. Because of some superstitions that had developed about it, having healing properties and a man had been there 38 years, Jesus heals the man, tells him to roll up his mat and go home. The Jews are insulted because they think Jesus has violated the Sabbath because you’re not supposed to do work on the Sabbath. Not supposed to carry your bed on the Sabbath. Maybe you’re not even supposed to heal people on the Sabbath.

So the Jews confront Jesus about His violation of the Sabbath. Instead of backing off and trying to mitigate their hostility on that issue, He elevates it by saying, “I’ll do anything I want on the Sabbath because I’m God.” That starts in verse 17 and runs down to the end of verse 29, all of that is simply an amazing statement by Jesus that He is equal to God and therefore is God and that’s how they read it because in verse 18 they confess that He’s making Himself equal with God. That’s the

ultimate blasphemy.

So that's how all of this sort of comes about. He's facing these hostile leaders who are angry at Him for violating the Sabbath, and that was bad enough. And now He has declared Himself equal with God and their fury knows no bounds. He raises the confrontation over the Sabbath to a Christological issue, to a discussion about His identity and what He says is, you will remember, starting in verse 17 and running all the way to verse 29, is that I am equal to God in essence or nature, I'm equal to God in works, I do the same things that God does, the same way that God does them. I am equal to God in power. I have the power to give life. I'm equal to God in authority. I rendered final judgment on everyone. I'm equal to God in truth. I am equal to God because everything I say and everything God says are equally true. In every sense Jesus claims to be equal to God. And then that amazing statement in verse 23, "Since all of that is true, I deserve equal worship...equal worship. And if you don't honor Me, you don't honor God."

So this is more than they can possibly contain. Jesus is making the issue clear in their minds. Now for somebody to say that is really assuming a lot. If somebody said that in front of you, you would say, "You know what? That's really not enough because that is such a massive claim. We need some testimony outside of you." And that's what comes in verses 30 and following.

Here Jesus calls another witness to give testimony to Him. Now who would be the best witness that He could call? No question, God the Father. He is the one they will say they worship. He is the one they will say they know, even though they don't. He is the one they declare to be their God.

So let's go to the highest possible standard of testimony, let's go to the one and only true God. And that's exactly what Jesus does. So from verse 30 down into verse 40, Jesus calls on God the Father to back up His testimony. And it's really an amazing portion of Scripture. Sometimes it's cut up in ways that it shouldn't be cut up, and I'm going to try to help you with that this morning and even next time.

He starts out by introducing His relationship to the Father in verse 30, which is a summary of everything He said from 17 to 29, "I can do nothing on My own initiative, as I hear, I judge. My judgment is just because I do not seek My own will but the will of Him who sent Me." Again He reiterates the claim that infuriated them and caused them to accuse Him of blasphemy. He says, "I'm equal to God. I do not do anything on My own initiative. I don't act independently of God. I only do what God does the way God does, and when He does it, where He does it, to whom He does it. And in the case of judgment, My judgment is always just because it's not independent of God, it's not as if My will was different than His, but the will of Him who sent Me." And again He starts out by saying, "I am one with the one who sent Me, God." Contrary to His enemies accusation, that He blasphemed, they are the blasphemers. He always glorified God by acting in perfect unity with God, perfect accord with God's will.

So, He will now call on God to be His testimony. If this claim is true, can God back it up? To say, "I'm one with God in nature. I'm one with God in work. I'm one with God in power. I'm one with God in truth. And therefore I am one with God in honor is one thing, would God back that up?" Let's hear from God, and we're going to do that. But before we do that, we'll start doing that in verse 31, just a couple of theological comments. That statement, "I can do nothing on My own initiative," I think is important. There has been a long standing discussion on whether or not Jesus could have sinned, whether or not Jesus could have sinned. Some say He could have sinned, but didn't sin. That would

be to say He's able not to sin. He's able not to sin, the Latin phrase is *passé non- pacara(???)* He's able not to sin. He could have sinned, but He was able not to sin and He did not sin. That is many good orthodox theologians affirm that.

On the other hand, some say, and I would agree with this, that He was not able to sin. That would be *non-passe-pacari(??)* not able to sin. Why do I say He was not able to sin? Not because of some rational idea coming out of musing about His nature, but because of that line at the beginning of verse 30, "I can do nothing on My own initiative." He is saying that it is impossible for Me to do anything that is not the Father's will. And the Father would never will sin therefore it is impossible for Him to sin. So if you're ever in discussion about, I can't imagine you will be *passé non pacari, or non-passe pacari*, roll out John 5:30 and ask the person if you believe that He could have sinned theoretically, then how do you interpret the fact that it's impossible for Him to do anything other than the Father's will even in His humanity? So you can file that for your next serious theological debate on that subject.

Now I want to add one other note here. You will notice that He shifts into the first person, "As I hear, I judge." Verse 31, "If I..." and He goes on, "I say these things," in verse 34. "I have greater testimony," verse 35. It's all first person. That's new. Starting in verse 17 He talked in the third person, talked about the Son of Man, the Son of Man, the Son of Man, the Son of God, the Son of God, the Son of God, and He was making claims that were so bizarre to the Jews, so far out, so outrageous that He kept a kind of distance by using the third person. Now He has elevated this proclamation to a level where He speaks in the first person, not distancing Himself at all.

Another point to make, "As I hear, I judge," doesn't mean that He has real ears throughout eternity and listen to everything the Father said. That's anthropomorphic. We understand that you absorb things when you hear them. You absorb things when you see them. He doesn't have ears, He doesn't have eyes, He's eternally God and God is a Spirit eternally before the incarnation, all this simply means is whatever is the Father's will that I perceive in My divine mind is what I do. He has an exact knowledge of the will of God, as does the Holy Spirit according to Romans 8:27, the Spirit makes intercessions for us because the Spirit knows the mind of God and God knows the mind of the Spirit. That's Romans 8:27. So there is complete knowledge in the trinity, each member having full knowledge of all the knowledge that is contained within the Trinity which is all the knowledge that there is in existence or can be, and Jesus is simply saying, "I know everything."

Somebody can't say, "Well, You do the Father's will but You don't know it all. Or how do You...what makes You think You know all the Father's will?" And Jesus is saying this, He said, "On many occasions, I know...I know, I listen in a Trinitarian sense and have full knowledge of the will of the Father. And because I have full knowledge of the will of the Father, I can tell you the Father's testimony concerning Me...the Father's testimony concerning Me." And that's what He's going to give.

Now let's jump in to verse 31 and see how far we get. Just a minute while I turn back the clock. I can't do that. All right, verse 31...verse 31, "If I alone testify about Myself, My testimony is not true." Now some people say, "Well, there you go, Jesus didn't even believe Himself." That's not what that's saying at all. How do I know that? Chapter 8 verse 12, "Jesus again spoke to them saying, 'I am the light of the world. He who follows Me will not walk in the darkness but will have the light of life.' So the Pharisees said to Him...He's making this amazing claim...'You are testifying about Yourself, Your testimony is not true.' Jesus answered and said to them, 'Even if I testify about

Myself, My testimony IS true for I know where I came from and where I'm going, but you don't know where I come from or where I'm going because you judge according to the flesh."

Jesus says there, "Even if I testify of Myself, My testimony is true." Of course, He's the Way, the Truth and the Life. It's true. What's He saying in verse 31? He's simply deferring to them, to the very thing that they said in John 8, "If you testify of Yourself, Your testimony is not true, that's not sufficient." Where did they get that idea? Well that's obvious. If somebody came in and said, "I'm God, by the way, and I want you to know that, I am equal to God in every sense." You'd say, "Wait a minute! I need more external, objective evidence, that's not enough." He concedes to that, that in their eyes if He testifies alone about Himself, His testimony is not true. And what would they throw at Him? Deuteronomy, "That everything has to be confirmed in the mouth of two or three witnesses." So He says, "Let Me call on the Father who would be the purest, truest of all and let Him give a three-fold testimony just to fulfill the requirement of the Old Testament." The Father will give a three-fold testimony.

He introduces Him this way, in verse 32, "There is another who testifies of Me and I know that the testimony which He gives about Me is true." Who is He referring to? Well the translators rightly put a capital "H" on the word He, so they understand He's talking about God, and He is. "I want to take you to another who testifies of Me and I know that the testimony which He gives about Me is true." And He turns to the testimony of the Father which, of course, deeply, conscious of everything concerning the Father because He's one with the Father, one with the divine nature, He knows exactly what the testimony of the Father is and the truthfulness of it.

So let me turn to the testimony of the Father. What is the Father's testimony? Now people get confused with the rest of this passage and they start cutting it up, even there's some little editorial insertions here that make it more confusing. Just read it as one paragraph, from verse 33 to 39 is all the Father's testimony. But it comes in three forms. It comes through three means.

First it comes through John the Baptist, then it comes through the miracles of Jesus, then it comes through the Scripture. Okay? But it's all the Father's testimony.

You say, "Well wait a minute, isn't the Father's testimony at the Baptism where He said A voice out of heaven, this is My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased?" Yes, but John the Baptist was there and heard that and Jesus heard that but there's no indication anybody else heard it. Well you say, "Well isn't the Father's testimony the Transfiguration, where again the Father says this is My beloved Son, listen to Him?" Yes, but the only people who were at the Transfiguration were Peter, James and John. And in the chaos of that moment, the trauma of it all, we don't know what they heard, if anything. But we do know this, that nobody else heard any of those things. And that's pretty clear and that's why verse 37 says, the middle of the verse, "You have neither heard His voice at any time, nor seen His form." So He's not appealing to something that was audibly said by the Father.

The testimony of the Father has come through John the Baptist, through the miracles of Jesus, and through the Scripture. And may I encourage you to think of these as increasingly impactful. The testimony of John is great. The testimony of the miracles is greater, and that's what Jesus calls it, greater testimony in verse 36. But the testimony of Scripture is the greatest. So like a rabbi going from the lessor to the greater, He moves through these dimensions of the Father's testimony.

Well let's look, at least, for a moment at the testimony of the prophet John the Baptist. He starts right into that in verse 33, "You have sent to John, you sent people to John," He's talking to the Jewish leaders. You sent people to John. You told people John was a prophet, first prophet in 400 years. You were caught up in the John the Baptist fever. The leaders even went, remember? When the leaders came and showed up and John says to them, "You snakes, you vipers, who warned you to flee from the wrath to come?" They sent the people, all Judea, all Jerusalem, pouring out to the Jordan River where John was preaching and baptizing and preparing people for the arrival of Messiah. There was a national fever over the prophet John the Baptist. He did no miracles but he was clearly a fulfillment in their minds of the promise of the Old Testament, a voice crying in the wilderness, make straight the path for the Lord and he was the forerunner they had been waiting for in their minds, and they all knew he was a prophet. You yourselves have sent to John and he testified to the truth...you went. Read Matthew 3, Luke 3, John 1, mobs of people, all Judea, it says, is pouring out to John as a prophet.

And you not only saw him as a prophet, but go down to verse 35 for a moment. He was the lamp that was burning and was shining. He's not just a prophet, he's a lamp. *Luchnos* is the word, it means a lamp. It's different from the light. He's not the light, Christ is the light, but John is the lamp. Christ is THE light, light itself, spiritually speaking, and John is a small lamp. But he's not just an ordinary lamp, he is a burning and shining lamp, been nothing like him. So this is our Lord's way of referring to the fact that they saw John as unique, a remarkable tribute. Back in John 1:6-8 it says of John, "He was not the light but he came to bear witness to the light," remember that? "He is not the light, but he is the lamp that reflects the light." He is the lamp filled, as it were, with the oil of the Holy Spirit from His mother's womb and lit with the light that shines to reveal Christ. He is effective. He is a burning, shining lamp.

People are drawn to him like moths to the flame. And you were willing, it says at the end of verse 35, you were willing to rejoice for a while in his light. You came to John. Back up to verse 34, "The testimony which I receive is not from man. The testimony which I receive from John the Baptist doesn't have a human source." He's saying this is the Father's testimony. John the Baptist is the first one to give testimony to Me and he is a prophet of God. They all acknowledge that. Everybody thought John was a prophet of God. It was the Father who commissioned him. In fact, the Father—the whole thing starts in the first chapter of Luke, it tells a story—when the Father sends an angel Gabriel to a barren couple in their eighties, Zacharias and Elizabeth, says you're going to have a child, so he's a miracle child. The Father plants the Holy Spirit in the child in the womb of Elizabeth, the Father literally gives life to that womb and then gives the Holy Spirit to the life in the womb. In every sense this child is the Father's production and he will be a prophet, chapter 1, Zacharias makes this amazing declaration when he gives tribute to what God is doing in this child. It's one of the greatest statements in all of Scripture regarding John. "And you child," verse 76, Luke 1, "will be called the prophet of the Most High...the prophet of the Most High."

Look, John didn't get his message by looking at tea leaves. John didn't get his message by contemplating constellations, reading horoscopes. It didn't come up from inside of him. He didn't consult powers below. He was a prophet of the Most High God. God was giving testimony through John the Baptist. And the people acknowledged Him as a true prophet, speaking the testimony of God. And by the way, his testimony was regarding salvation...his testimony was regarding salvation. What did John say? "Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world." Salvation was his message. In fact, Zacharias understood that. "You, child, will be called the prophet of the Most High. You will go before the Lord to prepare His ways, to give to His people the

knowledge of salvation by the forgiveness of their sins.”

So John came preaching forgiveness of sins, salvation through the Lamb of God, Jesus Christ. John was the Father’s prophet...the Father’s testimony. And they received it. Chapter 10 of John’s gospel in verse 41, “Many came to him and were saying, ‘While John performed no sign, yet everything John said about this man was true and many believed him there.’”

They believed. Oh they believed superficially, they believed he was a prophet sent from God, they believed that. That’s what they said about Jesus, right? What did Nicodemus say, “We know You’re a man sent from God because nobody can do what You do.” Well John didn’t do the miracles, but they all believed he was a prophet of God. So this is the first of the Father’s three testimonies. Everyone thought he was a prophet, declared him a prophet, basked in his ministry, went out, God baptized, which means they would have to take on a proselyte baptism which is declaring you’re no better than a Gentile because that’s a baptism that was for Gentiles who wanted to enter the religion of Judaism. So you have to see yourself as alienated from God like a Gentile, repent of your sins and go through this proselyte baptism. They were willing to do it for a season. And by the way, at the very time our Lord is saying this, John is either in prison or has already been beheaded and had his head served on a platter and is in the presence of the Lord. He’s already out of the picture. That’s why our Lord says, “For a while...for a while you basked in the light being reflective through the lamp.” You went to John the Baptist. You believed he was a prophet. You were like gnats dancing in the sunlight. But the message that he gave you was that I was the Lamb of God, you accepted the prophet and rejected his message. That’s the nature of unwillingness. That’s the sinner’s heart. Sent a prophet from God with the true message, they will believe the prophet came from God and they will reject the message. Unwillingness.

How can you receive the man, call him a prophet from God, rejoice in him, and then reject what he said? That’s what you’ve done. And that demonstrates the natural unwillingness of the human heart.

The second line of the Father’s testimony is all contained in one verse, verse 36. We don’t need to spend a lot of time with it. “But the testimony I have is greater than John,” let’s move up one notch, because now we’re moving from simply words to signs and wonders, “For the works which the Father has given Me to accomplish.” Please notice that, again we’re still dealing with the Father’s testimony because the Father gave to the Son the works that the Father would do. So it was the Father who gave the message and the calling, and even prepared John and it’s the Father who, of course, prepared the Son, gave life to the Son and determined the works the Son would do.

“The testimony 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.” You look at John and you say the Father sent him. The Father sent him but we reject his message. You look at Me, isn’t it obvious the Father sent Me? Didn’t Nicodemus say nobody can do what You do unless God is with him? That’s what Nicodemus said. That was never in question. Chapter 7, verse 31, “Many of the crowd believed in Him and they were saying, ‘When the Christ comes, He’ll not perform signs than those which this man has, will He?’” You mean, he’s not the Messiah? Someone will do more than this? Ridiculous.

They saw His signs, talking about miracles, wonders. In chapter 10, again I’ve said this often, but it needs to be repeated. They never denied any miracle of His. Chapter 10 verse 25, “I told you and you don’t believe. The works that I do in My Father’s name, these testify of Me.” Again, the works

that Jesus did were the Father's testimony through Him. Why? Because He only did what the Father willed Him to do. So this was the Father's testimony.

"Do you say of Him, whom the Father sanctified and sent into the world, you are blaspheming because I said I am the Son of God, the Father set Me apart, the Father sent Me, are you saying to the one the Father sent into the world that You're a blasphemer?" Verse 37, "If I do not do the works of My Father, do not believe Me. But if I do them, though you do not believe Me, believe the works so that you may know and understand that the Father is in Me and I in the Father." Again the miracles of Jesus go back to the Father's will and the Father's power obviously expressed through the Holy Spirit.

Chapter 11 verse 47, "The chief priests," listen to this, the top of the pile, "and the Pharisees convened a council and what did they say? 'What are we doing? What are we going to do? For this man is performing many signs.'" They affirmed them and then deny Him.

John 14:11, "Believe Me that I am in the Father and the Father is in Me, believe because of the works." John 15:24, one more, "If I hadn't done among them the works which no one else did, they would not have sinned. But now they have both seen and hated Me and My Father, as well." Reject Christ, you reject the Father because the miracles that Jesus did, are the Father's testimony in Him.

I have another, verse 32, who testifies of Me and His testimony is true. It came first through the ministry and the preaching of the prophet of God, John the Baptist. It has come second through the miracles that I have done, verse 36, which the Father has given Me to accomplish."

What does that mean? What do you mean the Father gave Him to do those? That's speaking of His incarnation. Always God, always all the attributes of God. Always the Creator who made everything that existed. It's not that the Father gave Him the power to do them, He gave Him the right to do them because He willfully restricted His independent use or His personal use of attributes in His incarnation to only that which the Father gave Him to do. Christ is saying, "You heard John the Baptist, you said he was a prophet, you rejected his message. Essentially chopped his head off. I come along, the Father gives testimony through Me and the miracles and you persecute Me and you hate Me and you want to kill Me. This isn't about evidence, you can't have any greater evidence than what has been given."

And that takes us to the greatest of all evidences, the testimony of the Scripture. And that's the theme starting at verse 37 and following. Scripture is the Word, the problem is verse 38, "You don't have His Word in you. You search the Scriptures...verse 39...but you reject. You reject the prophet, you reject the miracles I do, you reject the Scripture. So severe is their rejection of Scripture, if you drop down to verse 35, a shocking statement is made...verse 45, "Don't think that I'll accuse you before the Father." When you get to the final judgment and you stand before the Father, don't think that I'm going to be your accuser. The one who accuses you is going to be Moses. Wow! Moses is going to be the prosecuting attorney, bringing the condemnation. You had the Scriptures and you didn't believe them either. You didn't believe the prophet, you didn't believe the miracles, you didn't believe the Scripture. And we're going to dig into that next time. this is the unwillingness of the human heart.

Father, we thank You for Your powerful truth, we feel in experiences like this that we are alive at the

very time, transported as it were to these momentous occasions with our Lord so profoundly blessed to be able to embrace the truth that You've given us in Your Word, to understand Him and to understand ourselves and to understand the world around us. Lord, this is the great inability, the great unwillingness that holds the human heart captive to eternal hell and all we can say is, Lord, the responsibility will fall upon the one who refused to believe. The sinner must come at least to the point where he can say with that man that met Jesus, "Lord, I believe, help my unbelief." Lord, would You grant power to the sinner to believe. Break that unwillingness. What can the sinner do but cry out, "Lord, make me willing. Make me willing. Open my heart, make me willing." May there be men and women who cry that even now in response to these words.

Father, do that work in hearts today and beyond where this message may go for many years to come. We thank You again for the cohesive character of Scripture, the power of it went under the most careful scrutiny and examination, the clarity of it. May You go where My words could never go, where even the truth on its own cannot go and by the Holy Spirit embed these things into our lives so that they show up making us look more like Christ. We pray in His name. Amen.

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