

John 5:30-47

II. Jesus Reveals Himself to the World (1:19-12:50)

I. The Third Sign – Healing of the Lame Man (5:1-18)

J. The Third Discourse – The Divine Son, Part One (5:18-29)

The Third Discourse – The Divine Son, Part Two (5:30-47)

In the second part of this discourse, Jesus is going to continue to push back against the Jews who are accusing Him of blasphemy. Jesus has clearly and rightfully made Himself one with the Father, and He's going to make sure the Jews know that He didn't misspeak! We see the transition in v. 30 from the theme of judgment in vv. 19-29 to the theme of witness/testimony, the words for which occur eleven times in vv. 31-40. Jesus has come to do *the will of the Father who sent Him* (v. 30), but how could they be certain that was indeed the case?

Jesus begins in v. 31 by saying that it would be inadequate for Him to *bear witness of Himself*. This is in accordance with the Mosaic Law, most notably Deuteronomy 19:15 –

One witness shall not rise against a man concerning any iniquity or any sin that he commits; by the mouth of two or three witnesses the matter shall be established.

In other words, for someone's word to be established as true, it must be verified by at least two people. For the purposes of the Mosaic Law, this was especially important when it came to establishing guilt in a legal case.¹ Here in John 5, Jesus is going to establish His veracity and validity by appealing to three witnesses of His own. While he mentions John the Baptist in vv. 33-35, he ultimately sets John aside, likely because John the Baptist had already been rejected by the Jews. If they weren't going to accept John himself, they wouldn't accept his witness to Jesus as the Messiah!

The three witnesses that Jesus has in mind are His works (v. 36), His Father (v. 37), and the Old Testament (vv. 38-39). All three bear witness to the fact that Jesus is who He says He is, and that He will do what He says He will do, up to and including the forgiveness of sins. **His works**, or miracles, authenticate the message. This is true of all miracles throughout the Word of God. Before the Word of God was completed, the way to know that a message came from God was for Him to authenticate it alongside miracles. Today, we know something is of God because it aligns with His Word.

Perhaps Jesus' reference to **His Father** goes back to the voice at His baptism (cf. Matt 3:17; Luke 3:22; Mark 1:11; John 1:34).

The Old Testament, or **the Scriptures**, also bear witness to Jesus. These Jews thought that they had eternal life simply because they had the Word of God. Yet Jesus levels a serious accusation against them in v. 38; they think they have His Word, but it's not *abiding in* them. They know what the Word of God says, but it has never been coupled with faith. If they truly understood the Word and believed it to be true, that would *come to Jesus that they may have life* (v. 40).

While Jesus will return to the Scriptures in vv. 45-47, He first takes a detour to talk about honor; specifically, that He does *not receive honor from men* (v. 41). Once again, he chastises them for not having *the love of God in* them (v. 42). It seems as though their resistance to seeking *the honor that*

¹This becomes an important concept in John 8, where Jesus refuses to condemn the women caught in adultery! More on that in the weeks to come. . .

comes from God lies in the fact that they still want to *receive honor from one another* (v. 44). We often see how those with much in this life are the ones to reject needing help outside of themselves. Paul writes about this in 1 Corinthians 1:26-30 (i.e., *the base things of the world and the things which are despised God has chosen*; v. 28). It's only when we remove every shred of self-sufficiency and self-ability that we can believe the Gospel for what it is: a gift of pure grace!

Lest the Jews think that Jesus Himself was accusing them, in returns to the testimony of their Scriptures in vv. 45-47. Moses, He says, is the *one who accuses* them (v. 45).² *If they believed Moses, they would believe Him; for he wrote about Him* (v. 46). Far from seeing the Old Testament as irrelevant or inapplicable to us today, Jesus Himself affirmed the importance and relevance of the Old Testament. After all, the Old Testament speaks about Him! Jesus *did not come to destroy [the Law] but to fulfill [it]* (Matt 5:17)!

We can't divorce or unhitch ourselves from the Old Testament. Indeed, we can't fully understand the New Testament without coming to terms with the Old Testament. That's one of the reasons why we alternate back and forth between the Old and New Testaments on both Sunday and Wednesday mornings. Perhaps we naturally feel like one is more relevant and applicable to our lives, but it's nevertheless best for our spiritual health.³

Issuing one final question to the Jews in v. 46, Jesus says it's no wonder they don't believe His words, because they don't believe Moses'. To accept Moses would be to accept Jesus. To deny Jesus would be to deny Moses.

²Note that Jesus ascribes authorship of the Law (i.e., Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy) to Moses.

³I'd eat potatoes all day every day if I could, but it's necessary to have a full and balanced diet!