

Evidence that Demands A Verdict

John 5.31-47

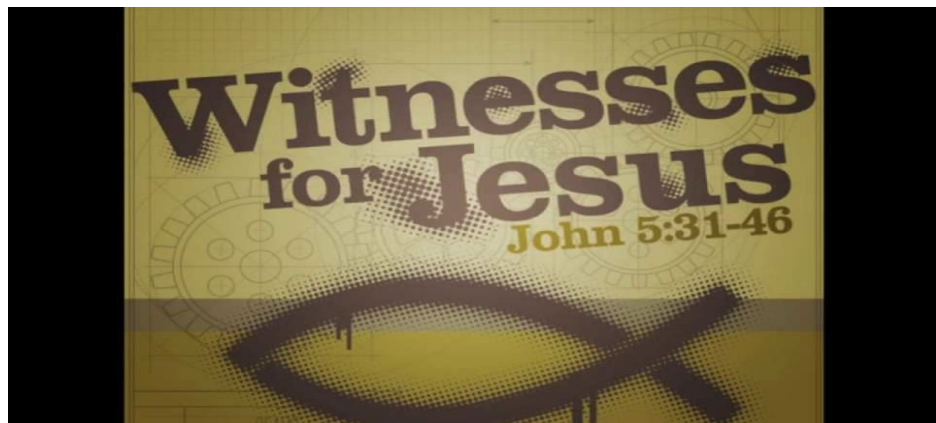
Jesus healed on the Sabbath to get the attention of the Jewish leaders, then declared that He was deity – the Son of God. But what evidences back up His claim? Jesus lists four “witnesses” which verify that He is the Son of God, then exposes the real reason why they, and many today, reject Him.

‘Witnesses’ confirming Jesus is the Son of God (31-40)

- John the Baptist (33-35)
- Jesus’ miracles (36)
- God the Father (37-38)
- The Old Testament (39)

The Basis of Unbelief: Seeking praise of men, not of God (41-47)

- Jews pursued works that brought the praise of men
- A Trap for all Generations: How this affects us today



1. The first half of John’s Gospel is called the Book of Signs because it records Jesus’ miracles and discourses, which affirm His deity. The miracle at the pool of Bethesda and His ensuing discourse in John 5 are connected. Healing on the Sabbath leads to Jesus’ affirmation that ‘like Father, like Son,’ He does the same works as the Father, thus showing His deity. This “show and tell” approach is followed by our passage today. How does John 5.31-47 further Jesus’ claim to being the Son of God?
2. In Jn. 5.31, Jesus says that if He alone bears witness about Himself, His testimony is not true (or verified). This principle is based in the Old Testament (Num. 35.30; Deut. 17.6; 19.15). Rabbis expanded this into “No man may be believed for himself” (Keth. 2.9). Jesus quotes the Jews’ own scholars, and even ‘playing by their rules,’ He will still prove His deity! By the way, how is this principle applied in New Testament teaching (Mt. 18.16; 2 Cor. 13.1; 1 Tim. 5.19)? Bonus: How does Jesus use this principle in John 8.12-18?
3. Four ‘witnesses’ to Jesus’ deity are given in Jn. 5.32-40. For John the Baptist’s testimony, cf. Jn. 1.19-36 & 3.25-36. For the testimony of Jesus miracles, see Isa. 35.5-6; Jn. 3.2; 9.30-33; 10.37-38. What ways can you think of that God the Father testified to Jesus’ deity? In what ways do the Old Testament Scriptures testify to His deity?
4. In the last section of John 5 (verses 41-47), Jesus directly confronts the Jews’ refusal to even consider the evidence that He is God. The ‘core reason’ they cannot believe in Him is given in v44. What is it? What fallacy is exposed in v42? How had they placed their hope in (the writings of) Moses (v45; cf. v39)? Can you think of passages in the Books of Moses that point to Christ?
5. Jesus chides the Jews for seeking praise from each other and not from God (v44). Do you think this might be a problem today? How can Christians – even Christian leaders! – desire the praise of men more than of God? What would show that we truly have the love of God in us?