

Two, Three, and More Witnesses to Christ: John 5:31–47
Jaunting thru John: Message 15

Grace Chapel

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INTRODUCTION

May 11, 2008

REVIEW

<p>PURPOSE STATEMENT (John 20:30–31) 8 signs so readers may live eternally (by believing) that Jesus is the Christ, God’s Son.</p>
<p>PROLOGUE (John 1:1–18) Jesus Christ, a member of the Trinity, created the universe. John the Baptist testified about Him, so all might believe in Christ, but when He came to His own people, most rejected Him, but all who believe in Him become God’s children thru faith in Him (not thru physical birth).</p>
<p>EARLY MINISTRY (John 1:19–4:54) THE FIRST DISCIPLES (John 1:19–51) John the Baptist pointed all to Christ, so some of John’s disciples followed Jesus & believed in Him. FIRST SIGN WITNESSED BY JOHN (John 2:1–11) When Jesus turned water into wine (His first Galilean sign), His disciples believed in Him. MINISTRY IN JUDEA AT PASSOVER (John 2:13–3:36) Many (including Nicodemus) believed in Jesus at the Passover feast because of the miracles Jesus performed, but Jesus cryptically predicted His death and resurrection as the great sign that would prove that He is the Messiah, and then went into the Judean countryside to make disciples of the new believers. THE SAMARITAN WOMAN: John 4:1–26 Jesus went to Galilee & offered living water to a Samaritan woman, who questioned His ability to quench thirst eternally, but then asked Him if He were the Christ when He told her all things about herself. MINISTRY IN SYCHAR: 4:27–42 She persuaded men in town to see if Jesus might be the Messiah, as the disciples focused on food, so Jesus told them that the fields are ready for harvest & He allowed them to join in reaping (though they failed to sow); a ministry that led many Samaritans to believe in Christ MINISTRY IN GALILEE 4:43–45 Jesus went to Galilee, because He had already testified that no prophet is a celebrity in his hometown; Galileans welcomed Him after some saw Jesus’ signs in Jerusalem. HEALING THE ROYAL OFFICIAL’S SON: 4:46–54 A royal official asked Jesus to heal his dying son, Jesus noted the essential role of signs for Jews; the father urged Jesus to come to Capernaum; Jesus said, “Your son lives,” which he believed; as he went home, his servants said, “Your son lives.” He & his household believed</p>
<p>CONTROVERSY SECTION: John 5–12 HEALING THE LAME MAN: 5:1–15 Jesus told a lame man who awaited an angelic healing to pick up his bedroll & walk. Officials scolded him for carrying his bedroll on the Sabbath & sought to confront the one who healed him.</p>
<p>HEALING THE LAME MAN: 5:16–23 When Judeans sought to kill Jesus for breaking the Sabbath & claiming equality with God, He said that He only does what the Father does & He will amaze them with greater works (even raising the dead) & judging the world.</p>

REVIEW OF 5:16–30**Background: A plurality of court witnesses is expected by Old and New Testaments**

Deuteronomy 17⁶ Whoever is deserving of death shall be put to death on the testimony of two or three witnesses; he shall not be put to death on the testimony of one witness.

1 Timothy 5¹⁹ Do not receive an accusation against an elder except from two or three witnesses.

The reason for a plurality of witnesses is that cross-examination can uncover inconsistencies in fabricated testimony

John 5 resembles a court case, because officials want to kill Jesus as a Sabbath breaker and for claiming equality with God (John 5:16–18)

Jesus asserts that He has the right to heal on the Sabbath, because His Father legitimately works on the Sabbath and He only does what He learns from the Father (5:19–23)

Jesus wants to give them life (which He will do, if they believe), but He will judge (and condemn) them as unworthy of life (if they do not believe in Him) (5:24–30)

NEW EXPOSITION**A difficult issue: Does John 5:32 refer to the Father or to John the Baptist?**

The *Living Waters* booklet capitalizes *Another* (= the Father)

The NKJ does not capitalize *another* (= John the Baptist)

I have changed my view on this.

A. The outline seems smoother, if verse 32 refers to John the Baptist:

1. 5:31 would speak of Jesus
2. 5:32–35 would speak of John the Baptist
3. 5:36 would speak of Christ's works
4. 5:37ff. would speak of the Father

B. The outline seems rougher, if verse 32 refers to the Father:

1. 5:31 would speak of Jesus as a witness
2. 5:32 would speak of the Father
3. 5:33–35 would speak of John the Baptist
4. 5:36 would speak of Christ's works
5. 5:37ff. would speak of the Father

C. My view of verse 31 needed to change as well. My outline point will add some words of clarification for verse 31.

5:31 If Jesus *alone* testified for Himself, His testimony would not be valid in court

The word rendered *valid* in verses 31–32 is (literally) *true*, but the verse means:

A court could not regard the testimony of only one witness as true

In other words, translating the word as *valid* is appropriate.

Note, however, Jesus does nothing *alone* (cf. verse 30). He does not testify *alone*.

Note also that John 8 says that Jesus' self-testimony is valid, because the Father also testifies.

5:32–33 Jesus could call upon John the Baptist as a true witness, because John’s testimony agrees with Christ’s testimony—as the officials well know—because they sent delegations to John

Review of John’s testimony before the delegations of officials:

Prologue (John 1:1–18)

John’s testimony to the Lamb of God (John 1:19ff)

John’s testimony to Christ as the lifegiver who must increase (John 3:22ff.)

The details behind John 5:32–33 come from preceding context in John

5:33–35 Jesus does not receive testimony from men (so He will not call upon John as a witness in this trial), but Jesus presents His evidence for the promise of everlasting life to believers so that these officials (who briefly gave attention to John) may receive life

5:36 Jesus calls upon His own works as an corroborating witness that is greater than the witness of John the Baptist because the works are unimpeachable

This parallels the thought of the purpose statement (John 20:21)

It also agrees with what Jesus meant in John 2:19 as He answered 2:18

It conforms with what John records in John 2:23

It matches what Jesus told the royal official in John 4:48

5:37–38 Jesus calls upon the Father as an unimpeachable witness who's Word (scripture) does not abide in the unbelieving officials (as evidenced by their disbelief of Christ)

No one has seen the Father (except Christ) Cf. John 1:18

The officials lack an intimate knowledge of the Father through scripture

Christ knows the Father intimately by direct communion with the Father & thru scripture

5:39–40 The officials search the scriptures, for they think that they will live eternally (as a result of obeying all the commands of scripture), but have failed to see that the scriptures testify of Christ, thus, they do not come to Him to receive life by believing

Reading Comprehension

John 1:45

John 2:22

John 3:10

John 5:45–46

John 20:9

The standard of judgment of works at the Great White Throne (John 5:27ff.)

5:41–44 Christ only receives glory from the Father, but their love of praise from people prevents (their reading of scripture) from bringing them to the point of knowing God intimately and believing Christ (whom the Father sent)

5:45–46 It is not Jesus (alone) who will accuse them, but Moses (whom they admire) will testify that they disbelieved what Moses wrote about Christ

This contrasts with Nicodemus, who understood some truth & wanted to understand more

5:47 Jesus says that their rejection of what Moses said about Christ in scripture makes it virtually certain that they would reject Jesus' own words

CONCLUSION