

Witnessing for Christ

Compiled by Paul R. Blake

Introduction:

Text: John 5:30-47

A. Deut. 19:15

1. Cornerstone of the Jewish legal system: substantiation through multiple witnesses.
2. Reason: A single witness might be mistaken, in error, or lying for personal gain

I. AN AFFIRMATION OF DEPENDENCE

A. John 5:30

1. All of Jesus discussion regarding witnesses resulted from the need to answer the Jews who charged Him with a form of blasphemy
 - a. John 5:17-19
2. The Jewish leaders viewed Jesus as a renegade.
 - a. He believes in resurrection and angels, but He is not a Pharisee.
 - b. He is not bound by rabbinic traditions, but He not a Sadducee.
 - c. He teaches holiness and piety, but He is not an Essene.
 - d. He proclaims a coming kingdom, but He is not a Zealot.
 - e. He teaches respect for rulers, but He is not a Herodian.
3. Jesus is under God's authority and is following His orders.
 - a. When He heals on the Sabbath day, it is not because He is voiding the Sabbath, but rather it is authorized for the Son of God to do the work of God on the Sabbath.

II. THE NEED FOR WITNESSES

A. John 5:31-32

1. Anyone can claim Divine authority. It has been done many times.
2. The question is whether there are witnesses to back up the claims.
3. Jesus presents four great witnesses testifying on His behalf:
 - a. The word of John the Baptist - John 5:33-35
 - b. The statements made by the miracles of Jesus - John 5:36
 - c. The testimony of the Father - John 5:37-38
 - d. The witness of the Scriptures - John 5:39-47

III. THE WORD OF JOHN THE BAPTIST

A. John 5:33-35, 1:19-34

B. John's witness was from Heaven: "But the witness which I receive is not from man" (5:34).

1. John the Baptist did not come to the conclusion that Jesus was the Messiah because John was a perceptive theology student. The truth of the gospel is not something invented in a philosophy class. It was not conceived by a human mind. It was revealed from heaven.

- B. John's witness is given for our salvation: "I say these things that you may be saved" (5:34).
 - 1. Jesus did not need the witness of John to find out who He was. John's witness was given for our sake.
- C. John's witness was initially accepted: "You were willing to rejoice for a while in his light" (5:35).
 - 1. John's popularity did not last. It was okay as long as he spoke about sin in general, but when he started talking about their sins, he had gone too far. They had once been drawn to the light, but then the light drove them away when it threatened to expose them for what they really were.

IV. THE STATEMENTS MADE BY THE MIRACLES OF JESUS

- A. John 5:36, 3:1-2, 9:32-33
 - 1. In the same way that Jesus called for men to judge Him by the nature of His works, so also we will one day be judged by the nature of our own works - Matt. 7:17-20; 2Cor. 5:9-10

V. THE TESTIMONY OF THE FATHER

- A. John 5:37-38
- B. Matt. 3:16-17, 17:4-5; John 12:27-30
- C. The Jews prided themselves in their possession of the oracles of God. Out of all the other nations of the world, God had chosen them and had revealed Himself to them.
 - 1. Jesus tells them that they have not heard God unless they believe in Him as the promised Messiah. Their acceptance of Him is the determining factor in whether they are believing or unbelieving, whether they know God or not.

VI. THE WITNESS OF THE SCRIPTURES

- A. John 5:39-47
 - 1. The Jews had made a religion of studying the Scriptures. They treated their study of the Scriptures as an end in itself. They studied the Scriptures in order to expand their knowledge of the Scriptures rather than that it might change their lives.
 - 2. It is possible for us to fall into the same trap.
- B. The Old Testament is filled with prophecies of Jesus.
 - 1. They tell where He would be born.
 - 2. They speak of the miraculous nature of His birth.
 - 3. They list His ancestry.
 - 4. They address attempts against His life.
 - 5. They mention His sojourn in Egypt.
 - 6. They foretell the town of His upbringing.
 - 7. They describe His forerunner.
 - 8. They predict His ministry.
 - 9. They foretell His betrayal.
 - 10. They prophesy of His sufferings.

11. They describe numerous details of His death, burial, and resurrection.
 12. They even outline the spiritual nature of His Kingdom.
- C. The reason the Jews would not come to Jesus in that day is the same reason people do not come to Him today.
1. It has nothing to do with a lack of evidence.
 2. It is because Jesus is not who they want Him to be; He does not give them what they want.
 3. It has everything to do with rebellion and pride.
- D. The history of the Jews is filled with determination to follow men whom they define as God's Messiah.
1. Theudas rose up claiming to be somebody; 400 Jews followed him
 - a. Acts 5:36
 2. Judas of Galilee organized a revolt against Rome, and people rallied to his side - Acts 5:37
 3. Simon bar Kochba ("Son of the Star") came on the scene as a military Messiah; he was heralded as a savior in 132 A.D. by the Jewish scholar Rabbi Akiba. Thousands of Jews followed him and were destroyed by Roman legions.
- E. Have things changed among Gentiles today?
1. When someone rejects the truth of the gospel, they inevitably seek another, lesser leader or principle in which to believe.
 2. 2Thes. 2:9-12

Conclusion:

- A. It all comes down to the question: Do I accept the witness of the inspired prophet John the Baptist, the testimony of the works and miracles of Jesus, the authentication of God the Father, and all of the evidence of scripture, or do I foolishly trust my own uninformed and unenlightened reasoning?
- B. John 10:10-11, 14:6