

Evidence That Demands a Verdict
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John 5:31-38
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It's been a great blessing to have Amelia minister to us when she's been home during the Christmas break from the Master's College. She'll be heading back soon. Be praying for her as she ministers with Majesty and the Master's Corral. I'd like to dismiss the children now to Children's Church. May the Lord help you to grow in the grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ this morning. The songs this morning have been a really special blessing. They always are. We're blessed to have such wonderful music that God has given us. He's given us folks to minister to us here at Providence, but the hymn that we sang a little bit earlier, *The Sands of Time Were Sinking*, and then the song we just had sung by Amelia, *Captivate Us*, listen to these words. She wrote out the words for me by hand, actually. I told her I missed the lyrics the last time she sang, and what a blessing. So Patty and I were enjoying the lyrics as we were hearing the song. The first verse of that song: *Your face is beautiful and your eyes like the stars. Your gentle hands have healing, and there inside, the scars.*

I couldn't help but be drawn back to the last verse of 'The Sands of Time Were Sinking'. When we see Jesus, this is what that song's talking about. *The bride eyes not her garment, but her dear bridegroom's face. I will not gaze at glory, but on my King of Grace. Not at the crown He giveth, but on His pierced hand. The Lamb is all the glory of Emmanuel's lamp.* Praise God. What a glorious Savior we have.

This morning we want to look at our glorious Savior from the fifth Chapter of John's Gospel. We're returning to this passage after a couple of weeks off from the passage. Two weeks ago on Christmas Day, I preached from Galatians 4, and then last week, Steven preached from Psalm 101, and we were blessed by God's Word other places, but now we're back to our exposition of the Gospel of John this morning. The fifth chapter of John presents to us we have seen, one of the clearest explications of the doctrine of the Trinity, or more specifically, the doctrine of the deity of Jesus Christ. I've titled the message this morning: *Evidence That Demands a Verdict*. I'm borrowing that title from that well-known book by Josh McDowell. The tone of our passage this morning, Verses 31-38 of John 5, is decidedly forensic. They are legal in tone. One of the key word groups is the Greek word *martyreō* (μαρτυρέω) and *martyria* (μαρτυρία), meaning 'testify' and 'testimony'. The idea is to bear witness. This is one of the fundamental words in the whole

Gospel of John that really comes to a fore in this particular passage, but it's laced throughout the entire Gospel of John, that the Gospel of John we shared before in previous messages, in one sense, John is presenting the case for Christ in the whole Gospel. He is articulating and marshalling an argument so that his reader will come to the inescapable conclusion. He presents the evidence so that it demands the verdict that Jesus is not just merely man, but Jesus is truly the Son of God. His whole argument is aimed at that. In John 20:31, he states his purpose:

John 20:31 ~ but these have been written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name.

So the book of John presents testimony upon testimony. When you read the Gospel of John, and I encourage you to do this, just look at how John brings up witnesses. He calls them up. It starts off in the prologue by calling John the Baptist, and then you have him present in their own words their testimony. Someone encounters Jesus, and what do they say about Jesus? John wants you to hear it in their words. It's like calling a witness to the stand. He hasn't taken a deposition and just told you what they said. He wants you to hear it in their own words. So you see when John records how John the Baptist's disciples begin to follow Jesus, Andrew goes immediately after encountering Jesus and finds Peter. He says in John 1, "We found the Christ! We found the Messiah!" You have it in his words. This is Andrew speaking. "We have found the Messiah." Peter goes and hears. Then you have Philip go and find a friend Nathaniel and said, "We have found the one about whom Moses and the Prophets have been speaking." You have it in Philip's own words, and then you have Nathaniel come to Jesus. Nathaniel is very skeptical. Remember, Nathaniel had said, "He's from where? Nazareth? Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?" Philip says, "Come and see," and so he comes and sees, and Jesus says, "Behold, an Israelite in whom is no guile." Nathaniel says, "How do you know me?" Jesus says, "I saw you when you were under the fig tree before Philip called you." Nathaniel knows that this Man he's talking to knows his heart, knows where he was, and that he was meditating on Scripture. Even there when we looked at that passage, we saw that. That seems to be the apparent unfolding of the dialogue there. And in seeing himself exposed before this Man, this skeptic says, "Rabbi, You are the Son of God, the King of Israel." So you have again this testimony upon testimony.

We saw it in the last chapter, Chapter 4, where the woman at the well goes away and testifies, and says, "We have found the Messiah. Come see a man who told me everything about myself." And then the folks there from the town of Samaria go

and they hear Jesus, and after two days of Him preaching, John has us listen to their testimony, because they speak and they say, “We no longer believe in Him because of your testimony. We ourselves have heard, and we now know this is the Savior of the world.”

So he piles testimony upon testimony, and then you also have the signs that John gives, which are really material evidence. There are seven miracles that are recorded in the Gospel. He did many more miracles. These are authenticating, certifying verifications that He is the Son of God. And as he marshals this evidence, the weight of the evidence, if someone looks at this honestly, there is no avoiding the inescapable verdict that Jesus is truly God. He’s fully man and fully God. Here in John 5, we have an interesting thing, because Jesus Himself takes the stand. Now, of course, we have Him talking throughout the Gospel, and we have this happen many times, so the legal image there doesn’t fully flesh out what we need. But it’s still helpful to think of it from that standpoint. Jesus is presenting His own testimony. You have that in Verses 19-30, which we looked at the last two times we were in the Gospel of John. We looked at what Jesus said about Himself, and we saw that His testimony was to say that He is equal with God. He has presented the fact that He and the Father are completely equal in honor, equal in works, equal in essence.

Let’s read the text. We’ll begin reading at Verse 17, and we’ll go all the way through to Verse 38. We’re going to focus this morning on Verses 31-38, but we need to read the context. Let me remind you a little bit about what’s happened before this. The fifth chapter of John opens with Jesus coming to Jerusalem for a feast, and as He comes, He goes by the pool of Bethesda, which is just North of where the temple was. He goes to the pool of Bethesda where there are a number of people gathered around the pool, hoping to be healed, because there was this belief that the waters would be stirred and you could be healed. Jesus chooses one person there to heal, a man who is a paralytic, who’s been paralyzed for 38 years. Jesus heals him. The day is the Sabbath. Jesus gives him an interesting instruction. He could have said, “Be healed and come and pick up your palate tomorrow, because after all, today is the Sabbath.” He didn’t say that. He didn’t say, “Be healed.” He said, “Get up. Take up your palate, and walk.” He said that because what He was doing was provoking a confrontation, and this was a gracious act of the Son of God, because He wants to demonstrate who He is.

The most important question in all of the universe is: Who is Jesus Christ? And in fact, the most important question that any single person on the face of the earth can answer is this: Who do you say that He is? What do you say about Jesus Christ?

Your whole eternal destiny hinges on the answer to that question, and not just merely what you say, but what you mean from your heart. Do you believe? And so Jesus uses this healing on the Sabbath to provoke a controversy. He says, ***“Get up, pick up your pallet and walk.”***

We said that, in one sense, when the Jews saw this man carrying a pallet, they really thought there was a Sabbath violation. Jeremiah had said, “Don’t carry any burdens on the Sabbath.” So they are asking him, “What are you doing carrying this pallet? Don’t you realize you’re violating the Sabbath?” “The one who healed me told me to take my pallet.” “Wow, somebody healed you. Now we’ve got a second violation,” they think. “Who healed you? Who had the audacity to do a miraculous healing on the Sabbath?” They want to find out. Jesus has hidden Himself away because He wants things to kind of reach a boiling point, and so the fervor builds, and then He appears again in the temple, talks to the man, and then the man says, “It’s Him. He’s the one that healed me.” And Jesus, knowing that they are furious that He has done a miracle on the Sabbath, because they completely misunderstand the Sabbath, offers a defense, and His defense is unique here in the Gospels. He heals a number of times on the Sabbath as you read through Matthew, Mark, and Luke, and when they say, “What are you doing healing on the Sabbath?” He normally answers from just reasoning from humanity. He says, “Is it lawful to do good on the Sabbath?” This is His normal way of answering. “What man among you has a donkey and if he falls in a ditch will not get him out immediately? So you would get a donkey out of a ditch, but you can’t heal on the Sabbath?” That’s the normal way He argues. Here He does not do that.

Here we have His argument in Verse 17, and He’s going to say that God works on the Sabbath. “God, the Father works, and I, God the Son, work on the Sabbath.” In other words, man doesn’t work on the Sabbath, but God does. I’m God, and therefore I’m working on the Sabbath.” He asserts His deity unequivocally and absolutely with ultimate clarity, and they recognize it. Watch as we read through this passage, and you’ll see it again. And that leaves Him then to explain what the nature of His relationship with the Father is. Verse 17 of John 5:

John 5:17 ~ 17 But He answered them, “My Father is working until now, and I Myself am working.” 18 For this reason therefore the Jews were seeking all the more to kill Him, because He not only was breaking the Sabbath, but also was calling God His own Father, making Himself equal with God. 19 Therefore Jesus answered and was saying to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of Himself, unless it is something He sees the Father doing; for whatever the Father does, these

things the Son also does in like manner. 20 For the Father loves the Son, and shows Him all things that He Himself is doing; and the Father will show Him greater works than these, so that you will marvel. 21 For just as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, even so the Son also gives life to whom He wishes. 22 For not even the Father judges anyone, but He has given all judgment to the Son, 23 so that all will honor the Son even as they honor the Father. He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent Him. 24 “Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears My word, and believes Him who sent Me, has eternal life, and does not come into judgment, but has passed out of death into life.

25 Truly, truly, I say to you, an hour is coming and now is, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live. 26 For just as the Father has life in Himself, even so He gave to the Son also to have life in Himself; 27 and He gave Him authority to execute judgment, because He is the Son of Man. 28 Do not marvel at this; for an hour is coming, in which all who are in the tombs will hear His voice, 29 and will come forth; those who did the good deeds to a resurrection of life, those who committed the evil deeds to a resurrection of judgment. 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.

Let me interrupt the reading for one second and explain that what Jesus has done at this point is He asserted His deity, they want to kill Him all the more, and then He explains His deity. He’s unveiling something that is stunning for His hearers, the fact that the One God of the Old Testament is now being revealed in three Persons, or right here, in two Persons. The Holy Spirit is going to be unveiled in His teaching as well, that God is One as the Old Testament made clear. He is truly One in essence, but as the light begins to increase, in the coming of Jesus, it’s like the lights have come on. The lights were on dim in the Old Testament, and you had anticipations of the Trinity, like in Genesis 1:26: *Let us make man in our image.* What’s that mean? Or Genesis 11: *Let us go down and deal with this wickedness at Babel.* You had anticipations of the Trinity, and you had it in things like Isaiah that we saw earlier: *Mighty God, everlasting Father.* How will a son be born and He’s going to be God? But here you have Jesus unveil the reality of the fact that He is One with the Father and yet distinct personally. And He is equal in essence, equal in works, equal in honor. That’s what we looked at the last time we were in this passage. That’s the content of Verses 19-30. He is equal in essence, and essential being. He does the same works the Father does. The Father gives life. The Son gives life. The Father has the authority for all judgment. He gives to the Son

all judgment. Jesus is going to speak a word, and the dead all across the world are going to be raised from the dead and come to life. Truly He is God and He is equal in honor, because the Father's purpose, as He said in Verse 23: *...so that all will honor the Son even as they honor the Father.* He knows that He's giving some amazing revelation here, and what you have in the following verses is Jesus basically condescending down to the level of these men who are struggling to grasp this, and He gives more evidence. He encourages them with, "Don't you see, this is exactly consistent. What I've just told you is consistent with all that's gone before."

Verses 31-38:

31 "If I alone testify about Myself, My testimony is not true. 32 There is another who testifies of Me, and I know that the testimony which He gives about Me is true. 33 You have sent to John, and he has testified to the truth. 34 But the testimony which I receive is not from man, but I say these things so that you may be saved. 35 He was the lamp that was burning and was shining and you were willing to rejoice for a while in his light. 36 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. 37 And the Father who sent Me, He has testified of Me. You have neither heard His voice at any time nor seen His form. 38 You do not have His word abiding in you, for you do not believe Him whom He sent.

Let's pray together...

Our Father, we thank You for Your Word, and we pray now that You might, by Your Spirit, open for us the truths of Your Word, that in Your light, we might see light, and we pray this in Jesus' Name, Amen.

It's hard for us to feel what must have been going on in the minds and hearts of Jesus' hearers when He has just articulated the fact that He is equal to the Father. This was something to them that was completely unexpected. It shouldn't have been. His argument is, "If you had been reading your Bible carefully, you would have known this. If you had been reading carefully the unfolding of the Old Testament, you would have seen this." But nevertheless, it's difficult for them to grasp, and so the Son of God lovingly condescends to prove His point. He shouldn't have to prove His point. He's God. Just saying it ought to be enough, but He humbles Himself in the sense of saying in Verse 31: *"If I alone testify about Myself, My testimony is not true."* What He's saying is, "If I testify independently,

if I testify inconsistent with the rest of Scripture, if I testify by Myself, My testimony is not true.” Of course, He never would testify by Himself independently. He’s just said that everything the Father gives Him to do is what He does. He works in perfect cooperation with the Father. But He’s going to explain now, “Listen, everything that I’m telling you about My deity is corroborated.”

After giving His testimony, we’re going to consider now the two points for today’s message, which are the fact that He calls additional witnesses. He says, “I am truly divine. I am God. And as evidence, I want to call John the Baptist. I want you to hear the testimony of John.” That’s the first point. And then secondly, “I want you to hear the testimony of the Father.” That’s the second point which we’re going to spend more time on, is the testimony of God the Father. Jesus’ deity is clearly asserted first by Himself in Verse 19-30, and then He adds corroborating testimony, the testimony of John and the testimony of the Father. Jesus says:

John 5:31 ~ “If I alone testify about Myself, My testimony is not true. 32 There is another who testifies of Me, and I know that the testimony which He gives about Me is true.”

Who is He talking about here in Verse 32? “There is another who testifies of Me.” When you read the passage carefully, you see He’s talking in Verse 32 about the Father. That’s the main testimony He wants to bring. He wants to show that what He’s saying about who He is, is being continually corroborated by the Father who is speaking even now. All around His ministry, the Father is speaking and is corroborating what Jesus is saying. That’s what He’s going to get to. That’s His point, but you basically have a parenthesis where He then talks about John.

1) The Testimony of John:

John 5:33 ~ You have sent to John...

This is a parenthesis, and it’s not an insignificant one, but it’s not the main point.

John 5:33 ~ You have sent to John, and he has testified to the truth. 34 But the testimony which I receive is not from man,...

He’s saying, “I don’t really need John’s testimony. It doesn’t add anything to Me, because I have the Father continually dialoguing with Me.” That’s what He’s saying.

John 5:36 ~ But the testimony which I have is greater than the testimony of John;... “I have the testimony of the Father.” 37 And the Father who sent Me, He has testified of Me.

“Though I’m going to tell you about the testimony of the Father, let’s stop for a moment and talk about the testimony of John.”

John 5:33 ~ You have sent to John, and he has testified to the truth. 34 But the testimony which I receive is not from man, but I say these things so that you may be saved.

“Look, I don’t need John’s testimony, but I’m going to go here because you need it so that you can be saved.” You and I need it. We need a human person telling us, and that’s what He’s saying to them. “You value John, but if you really saw things as they are, you would know the Father is testifying, the Son is testifying, and so who needs another witness?” God is speaking. He’s made it clear. But because you and I are slow and dull of heart and mind, He gives us these other witnesses, and He tells us: ***You have sent to John...***

Turn back over to John 1:19. Remember John the apostle, one of Jesus’ twelve disciples is the author of the Gospel. One of the main characters in John the apostle’s Gospel is another man named John - John the Baptist - who was the forerunner before Christ, and John the Baptist is ministering. In fact, John the apostle begins his Gospel really emphasizing John the Baptist’s ministry and what he said about Jesus. Here in Verse 19, you have him say: ***This is the testimony of John,...*** You see the word testimony again. It’s that legal word. In fact, the word testify/testimony, *martyreō* (μαρτυρέω) and *martyria* (μαρτυρία), they occur about 100 times in the New Testament in total. Over 40 of them are in the Gospel of John. This is the biggest place. There are 31 verse references in John. The closest next to it is 10 in Acts. The noun testimony is found 10 times in the Gospel of John. The closest next to it is 3 in 1 John. So a key word for John is this idea of testimony. He’s proving a case. And he said:

John 1:19 ~ This is the testimony of John, when the Jews sent to him priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, “Who are you?”

Jesus is referring back to, “Hey, remember you guys sent to John the Baptist, and what did he say?” Look back over at John 5.

John 5:33 ~ You have sent to John, and he has testified to the truth.

John 5:35 ~ He was the lamp that was burning and was shining and you were willing to rejoice for a while in his light.

“You went out to hear Him. The nation went out to hear Him. The religious leaders went out to hear Him. You heard his testimony. What was he always saying when you went out to hear him? John the Baptist’s message was, ‘It’s not about me. It’s somebody coming after me.’”

Look back over to John 1. What was John’s testimony? They go to John the Baptist, this man who’s preaching with power. A prophet is now speaking in Israel again for the first time in over 400 years. There has been 400 years of silence from God broken. The darkness now pierced with the light of God’s truth coming from this strange man who’s dressed in interesting clothing and eating an interesting diet of locusts and honey, and he’s preaching. They say, “Who are you?” and in Verse 20 of Chapter 1:

John 1:20 ~ And he confessed and did not deny, but confessed, “I am not the Christ.” 21 They asked him, “What then? Are you Elijah?” And he said, “I am not.” “Are you the Prophet?” And he answered, “No.” 22 Then they said to him, “Who are you, so that we may give an answer to those who sent us? What do you say about yourself?” 23 He said, “I AM A VOICE OF ONE CRYING IN THE WILDERNESS, ‘MAKE STRAIGHT THE WAY OF THE LORD,’ as Isaiah the prophet said.”

“I’m the one that comes before the One the Lord sends.”

John 1:24 ~ Now they had been sent from the Pharisees. 25 They asked him, and said to him, “Why then are you baptizing, if you are not the Christ, nor Elijah, nor the Prophet?”

What does John say about the One that’s coming?

John 1:26 ~ John answered them saying, “I baptize in water, but among you stands One whom you do not know. 27 It is He who comes after me, the thong of whose sandal I am not worthy to untie.”

“There’s one coming after me. He’s even among you now. He’s not yet been revealed, but He’s about to be. When He comes, then you will see.” He goes on with the testimony:

John 1:29 ~ The next day he saw Jesus coming to him and *said, “Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world! 30 This is He on behalf of whom I said, ‘After me comes a Man who has a higher rank than I, for He existed before me.’

This is John’s testimony. “This is the One I was talking about. Remember, I told you that after me, there’s going to come somebody, and He’s the One to look to.” It’s interesting that John the apostle has John’s testimony of Verse 30 recorded twice, exactly word for word. Verse 30: ***‘After me comes a Man who has a higher rank than I, for He existed before me.’*** It’s also quoted in John 1:15, in the prologue. Look what he says in John 1:15:

John 1:15 ~ John testified about Him and cried out, saying, “This was He of whom I said, ‘He who comes after me has a higher rank than I, for He existed before me.’”

Whenever God repeats something like that, it’s important. John the Baptist is saying in that sentence something profound about Jesus. And when we read the rest of the Gospels, we get the clear picture that John the Baptist was six months older than Jesus. You read the account of John’s miraculous birth in Luke 1. You find out that Mary is told by the angel Gabriel that the Spirit of God is going to come upon her, and that she’s going to conceive. Gabriel tells her, “Your cousin Elizabeth is already in her sixth month of pregnancy. Though she was old and barren and unable to have children, God has visited her and has allowed her and her husband Zachariah to conceive.” So Mary hurries to Elizabeth’s home some miles away and spends several months with her.

We remember the story when she goes in, and Elizabeth hears the sound of Mary’s voice, and she immediately begins prophesying. The Spirit of the Lord comes upon her, and she says basically, “What is happened that the mother of my Lord should come to me?” The baby leaps in her womb. John the Baptist is already testifying. This six-month old fetus is saying, “There He is! There He is! That’s the One!”

John the Baptist is six months older, but he says, “He existed before me.” Twice we have it. And, “He has a higher rank than I.” We noted when we looked at this passage way back, that in the Jewish way of thinking, to be older was to be greater. If you’re older, they thought of age better than we do nowadays. And the more gray hair I get, the more I wish it was the way it used to be. Back then, gray hair was a sign of glory. People honored it. A person that was older was greater, and a person whose ministry began first was greater, so that John’s ministry, which

began at least several months before Jesus', and possibly as much as a year and a half before Jesus, his ministry would make him the greater rabbi, the greater teacher. The word rabbi itself means 'great one' in Hebrew. He was the greater, but he's saying, "No, contrary to expectations, though I was born first, I'm not greater. Though I started my ministry first, I'm not greater. In fact, I'm so much not greater that I'm not worthy to untie the sandal of the One who comes after me. I'm not worthy to be the lowest servant in the house of this One that is coming. Why? Because He existed before me." He's referencing back to the Old Testament revelation about the coming Messiah. Perhaps Micah 5:2 is ringing in his mind:

Micah 5:2 ~ "But as for you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, Too little to be among the clans of Judah, From you One will go forth for Me to be ruler in Israel. His goings forth are from long ago, From the days of eternity."

He knows. "The man who is born is not merely man. He has existed before me. He's God." That's John's testimony. His testimony is clear that again and again it's not me. Emphatically, it is not me. It is Him. John the apostle spends time again giving us John's testimony in John 3. John the Baptist's testimony again takes center stage in John 3:22-36, where John says, "I am not the Christ. I've been sent ahead of Him.

John 3:28 ~ You yourselves are my witnesses...

Witnesses there again is the same root word. Those who have seen my testimony. You have witnessed my testimony.

...that I said, 'I am not the Christ,' but, 'I have been sent ahead of Him.'
29 He who has the bride is the bridegroom;

"I'm just the friend of the bridegroom."

John 3:30 ~ He must increase, but I must decrease.

So the testimony of John should have been enough and Jesus says, "John was a lamp that was burning and was shining. God's Spirit was working mightily in him, and you were delighted to see the light and to go out and bask in the light, but the irony is you have not listened to him. You enjoy being titillated that a prophet was speaking. You enjoyed the echo of the word of God in your ears, and yet you have not listened to what he was saying." The testimony of John should have been

enough, but Jesus now moves to the greatest testimony, the testimony of the Father.

2) The Testimony of the Father:

John 5:36 ~ 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.

There are two types of testimony that the Father is giving here in this passage, according to Jesus. The first is what we just read. The testimony of the works of Jesus are actually the Father testifying about Jesus, that when Jesus does a work, that is the Father testifying about Jesus. The second type of testimony is the testimony of the word, in Verses 37 and 38. We'll look at that in a moment. First of all, we'll look at the testimony of the works.

He's saying, "The Father is testifying about Me every time you see Me do a miracle, because I've just told you in the previous section, ***...the Son can do nothing of Himself, unless it is something He sees the Father doing;*** So the Father does something and then I do it. So I'm able to do exactly what He does, but I'm doing exactly what He wants me to do, and He's chosen certain works for Me to do so that I can do them, and you can see that in My doing them, I'm equal to Him." He's talking about the signs, the miracles, and these are testifying. In fact, Jesus picks up again on this theme in John 10:25, when the Jews are again gathering around Him asking Him. It's amazing they asked this question based on what He's been saying. They say:

John 10:24 ~ The Jews then gathered around Him, and were saying to Him, "How long will You keep us in suspense? If You are the Christ, tell us plainly."

What? That's like you asking somebody, "Do you want pizza?" and they say, "Yes," and you say, "How long will you keep us in suspense, telling us what you want?" I wish that would work at home. "Honey, what do you want?" And she tells me, and I say, "No!" Anyway, I don't know why I went that way with it, but the idea is that the Lord is telling them again and again who He is, but look what Jesus says in Verse 25:

John 10:25 ~ Jesus answered them, “ I told you, and you do not believe; the works that I do in My Father’s name, these testify of Me. 26 But you do not believe because you are not of My sheep.

He repeats the same theme in Verse 37:

John 10:37 ~ If I do not do the works of My Father, do not believe Me; 38 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.”

The works of Christ are the Father’s authenticating, testifying certification. “That is My Son.” Look at His works and you see the Father’s signet seal of approval upon Jesus. That’s really what John’s been doing. I mentioned earlier the material evidence and the signs that he highlights in his Gospel – many, many miracles that Jesus did, so many miracles, that John says at the end of his Gospel that if they were all written down, the world wouldn’t hold the books, because Jesus did so much. When you look at Matthew 4 when He’s talking about His early healing ministry in Galilee, it says that Jesus went about the cities of Galilee, and He was healing all their diseases. People were coming from all over, bringing Him all the crippled, all the lame, all the weak, all those who were sick, and He was healing them all, the text says. I heard a preacher say one time that it was as if God banished disease from Galilee, and for several years there was no disease. Can you imagine that? Think about how many people that you know of today who have cancer, that deal with debilitating problems. Jesus came through and eradicated it. There were lesser works done in Judea because of the unbelief of the Jews and the providence of God, but He comes down and He’s doing works like the signs that we have in this book - the healing at Bethesda. These signs were testifying. John chooses them because they are miracles that uniquely communicate who Jesus is. He could have picked many, but he picks seven signs. Let’s think about the things we’ve already seen in the Gospel of John and the works that Jesus does, and what the Father’s testimony is.

I want to consider four things. We’ve technically seen only three signs at this point. The three signs we’ve seen was when Jesus turned water into wine at Cana of Galilee. Then we had at the end of chapter 4, the healing of a royal official’s son who was about to die. Then in chapter 5, we’ve just been talking about the healing at the pool of Bethesda, of a man lame for 38 years. There’s a fourth thing I want to consider, and that is kind of a sign that’s not a sign. It’s not referred to as a sign by John, but I think he includes it because it is amazingly indicative and certifying

of who Jesus is, and that is the cleansing of the temple. These four things have already happened, and a lot of great stuff is going to happen in the rest of the book, climaxing with the healing of Lazarus, the raising from the dead of Lazarus, and then of course the greatest miracle of all, with Jesus Himself getting up out of the tomb. But the first four things that you have in the Gospel of John, what does it say about Jesus? What testimony is being born by the Father?

In John 2:1-11, Jesus turns water into wine. Remember the situation. There's a wedding, they've run short of wine, and this is a great embarrassment for the bridegroom and his family. The mother of Jesus, Mary, goes to Him and basically says, "Can You do something?" And Jesus graciously performs a miracle of extravagant proportions. Basically, we saw Him giving the equivalent of 750 bottles of fine wine. Six water pots are 150 gallons of fine wine. He turns water not into just grape juice but fine wine, so that the man says, "Why did you hold back the finest wine til the end? That's not the way you do it. You give them the fine wine up front, and then later you give them the cheap stuff, but you've reversed this." That was Jesus demonstrating His power to physically change one substance into another. But it was more than that. He was also demonstrating that He's the One who brings in the era of great joy. He's the Messiah, and so God is certifying, "Look at this One who has the power just to say, 'Put water in that water pot,' and He willed it into wine."

The second sign that wasn't really a sign was the cleansing of the temple. Look at the authority of Jesus there. He goes into the temple with a cord and He drives out this tremendous, chaotic group of people who have turned the Father's house into a den of robbers when it's supposed to be a house of prayer. But the audacity, and yet they respond to that. Somehow with the power of His personality, He cleanses the temple. That would be like somebody walking in here and saying, "Everybody get out of here!" Just one person, and we'd all just walk out, saying, "Okay." They'd come in and we'd just take off. Of course, that wouldn't be quite an analogy. Jesus isn't saying, "You shouldn't worship God." He's saying, "You should worship God rightly." But one man comes in, and look at the tremendous power of His presence.

Then there's the healing of the royal official's son who is at the point of death in John 4:46-54. The man travels 16 miles, this Gentile official, because he's heard Jesus is in Cana, and Jesus tells him, "Go. Your son lives." He speaks the word. "I'm not going to come heal him as you ask. I'm just going to say, 'Go. Your son lives.'" The man gets home and finds out when things had turned around and when he had revived, and they tell him it was about the seventh hour, and the man knew

it was the exact moment Jesus had said, “Go. Your son lives.” Sixteen miles away he’s healed.

Then there’s the healing at Bethesda. “Get up, pick up your pallet, and walk.” What are these works saying? The water turned to wine. What does it say? He is God? Yes. And it says that if you want joy, go to Jesus. He’s the only avenue for joy. If you want to be in the presence of God, the temple, if you want to come into His presence, what does the cleansing of the temple say? Remember what He said? “Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it.” He is where man meets God. He is the place that God and man come together, the temple of God. If you need healing, if you are at the point of death, if you’re afraid of dying, if you’re afraid of spending eternity in hell, where do you go? You must go to Jesus. He is the one who can say, “Live,” and you will live. He can give you eternal life. He is the one who heals. These signs are God the Father saying, “He is the One. Look at Him.” The Trinity - the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit have put forth Jesus. If you want to know God, you must go to Him. That’s the testimony of the works that the Father has given Jesus.

And then finally we’ll look at the testimony of the Word, which we’re going to spend much more time on, Lord willing, next week. We’re just going to introduce it briefly today.

3) The Testimony of the Word:

How has the Father testified? Verse 37:

John 5:37 ~ And the Father who sent Me, He has testified of Me. You have neither heard His voice at any time nor seen His form. 38 You do not have His word abiding in you, for you do not believe Him whom He sent. 39 You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; it is these that testify about Me;

The point that He’s making is that the Old Testament has been saying from the beginning that Jesus, the One to come, is going to be God. The Messiah is not just going to be a human, but He is going to be God. It has been there from the beginning. If you’ve been reading your Bible, you would know this, Jesus is saying. The Father has been testifying throughout every page of the Old Testament, testifying that the One who is coming is God.

I want to share with you just three references from Genesis quickly to show you how the deity of Christ was being laid out from the very beginning pages of the Scriptures.

When the Lord prophesies, the first picture of the Gospel is in Genesis 3:15, when He's speaking to the serpent. He says:

Genesis 3:15 ~ ...He shall bruise you on the head, And you shall bruise him on the heel."

That's a picture of Christ. It's a picture of the seed of the woman. The seed of the woman is an odd way to phrase it. Jesus will be the seed of the woman. The Messiah will be the seed of the woman. The seed comes through the man. What is this talking about? Why did He say the seed of the woman? He was anticipating the supernatural birth that Jesus would be the only person that's ever been born apart from the seed of a man. Only one person in history was born that way, born of a virgin. The Father planted the Son in the womb. It was a supernatural birth. This idea of supernatural birth continues to grow throughout the New Testament. You have Isaac born as a supernatural birth. Not quite as supernaturally as Jesus, of course, but Isaac is born to a man that's 100 years old and a woman who's 90 years old. Then Jacob was born of a supernatural birth. Then Joseph was born of a supernatural birth. Then Samson, Samuel, and until finally you have Isaiah 7:14: ***Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, a virgin will be with child and bear a son, and she will call His name Immanuel.***

The growing picture was that the Deliverer is going to come through a supernatural birth. The Messiah, the one who will break the power of Satan, will come through a supernatural birth, and it develops through the Old Testament, till Isaiah says that it will be a virgin birth, an amazing thing. And what will you call the child's name? Immanuel, which translated means 'God with us'. The virgin will give birth to the One who is God Himself. When the angel Gabriel told Mary she was going to conceive, he said, "He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High."

You have another reference in Genesis 14, where the story of Melchizedek is told. Abraham has won a great battle over the kings of the east, and he runs into a man that we never see before or after in the Scriptures, a man named Melchizedek, the king of Salem, and he pays tithes to him. A tithe of all that he has gathered he gives to Melchizedek. What's going on with that? Why did the Lord allow that to be in the Scripture? Well, it continues to be developed through the Scripture. First of all, the name Melchizedek means 'king of righteousness'. Who is a man that

could be a king of righteousness? *There's none righteous. No, not one.* We're anticipating something mysterious about this character. He's the king of righteousness who is the king of Salem. King of Salem literally means 'king of peace'. The king of righteousness is the king of peace. Psalm 1:10 picks that theme up and says:

Psalm 1:10 ~ ...Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek.

There's going to be a priest who comes to minister forever, eternally. That's Jesus Christ. So Genesis 14 is laying the groundwork, and then finally there's Genesis 22, the story of Abraham offering Isaac, where God comes to Abraham who has just received his son. He's probably now about 10 or 11 years old. He's waited so many years to receive his son, and he says in Verse 2:

Genesis 22:2 ~ He said, "Take now your son, your only son, whom you love, Isaac, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I will tell you."

And then two other times in the passage He speaks to Abraham, and He says, "Take your son, whom you love, and offer him." When you read that passage, you think, "Why, God, are you making this so painful for him?" It's enough to say, "Take your son and offer him," but why do You have to say, "Your son, your only son, whom you love"? Isn't that pouring salt in the wound?" Well, of course we know the story that He doesn't really want him to offer him. He says, "Do not hurt the boy. Now I know that you won't withhold your son, your only son," and then the Lord gives a substitute. Why all that language? What was going on with that? That was anticipating the fact that the Messiah would be God's Son. His only Son whom He loves would be the true substitute, and that's what John has been laying out in John's Gospel.

John 1:18 ~ No one has seen God at any time; the only begotten God who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him.

John 3:16 ~ For God so loved the world, that He gave His one and only Son...

All of these were picturing the fact that the One who is to come would be more than mere man. He would be God. So the works of Jesus testified of His deity. The Word of God from Genesis to Revelation testifies to His deity. The question for you and me is: Do we believe that? Do you believe that? And if He is truly God,

then there is only one response, and that is complete worship, not just in word but in deed. Surrender to Him, for He is worthy.

Let's go to Him in prayer...

Father, we thank You for sending Your Son into the world, your Son, your only Son whom You love, and not sparing Him as You spared Isaac, but You were willing to allow Him to bear our sins in His own body on the cross, to be an offering for us, to be the object of Your wrath. Thank You, Lord, for being willing to part with Your Son on the cross. Thank You, Lord Jesus, for being willing to drink the full cup of wrath, so that You could say, "It is finished!" And now we know that through faith in Christ, Your wrath is finished as it relates to us. There is no more - only grace, only love, if you're in Jesus. Father, our prayer is that You would help us to truly examine ourselves and where we stand, each person in this room. Have we accepted the testimony which Your Word gives, that Jesus Christ is fully God, that He Himself is the One who will judge the world in righteousness, that He Himself is the only One, the only Savior, the only mediator between God and man, and if we ascent to those things, have we placed our trust in Him? Are we resting in Him now, casting away all other hope, so that we can say, "Nothing in my hand I bring, only to Thy cross I cling." Father, may that be true of all of us for the glory of Your Name. We pray this in Jesus' Name, Amen.

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