

DIVISION VI

The Revelation of Jesus, the Authority and Power Over Life, 5:1–47

Chapter 5

VI. The Revelation of Jesus, the Authority & Power Over Life, 5:1–47

A. The Essential Authority: Power to Meet the World's Desperate Needs, 5:1–16

1. **Jesus attended a Jewish feast in Jerusalem** After this there was a feast of the Jews; and Jesus went up to Jerusalem.

2. **Scene 1: The diseased & the ill—a picture of the world's desperate need**
 - 2 Now there is at Jerusalem by the sheep *market* a pool, which is called in the Hebrew tongue Bethesda, having five porches.
 - a. Man's desperate hope: Lying in a pool of water of3 In these lay a great multitude of impotent folk, of blind, halt, withered, waiting for the moving of the water.
 - b. Man's desperate faith: Seeking for healing power in a worldly source, the pool of water 4 For an angel went down at a certain season into the pool, and troubled the water: whosoever then first after the troubling of the water stepped in was made whole of whatsoever disease he had.

3. **Scene 2: Jesus & the man—a picture of Jesus' power to meet the world's need** 5 And a certain man was there, which had an infirmity thirty and eight years.
 - a. The man's plight 6 When Jesus saw him lie, and knew that he had been now a long time *in that case*, he saith unto him, Wilt thou be made whole?
 - b. The Lord's compassion
 - 1) Saw his state
 - 2) Initiated a relationship

c. The man's helplessness: He had no family & no friends to help him 7 The impotent man answered him, Sir, I have no man, when the water is troubled, to put me into the pool: but while I am coming, an other steppeth down before me.

d. The Lord's power 8 Jesus saith unto him, Rise, take up thy bed, and walk.

e. The sinister problem: Jesus healed the man on the Sabbath 9 And immediately the man was made whole, and took up his bed, and walked: and on the same day was the sabbath.

4. Scene 3: The religionists & the man—a picture of dead religion trying to meet the world's need^{DS1} 10 The Jews therefore said unto him that was cured, It is the sabbath day: it is not lawful for thee to carry *thy* bed.

a. A religion of legalism

b. A religion ignorant of true authority, of the Messiah's true mission 11 He answered them, He that made me whole, the same said unto me, Take up thy bed, and walk.

c. A religion blind to love & doing good 12 Then asked they him, What man is that which said unto thee, Take up thy bed, and walk?

5. Scene 4: Jesus & the man after his healing—a picture of the believer's responsibility 13 And he that was healed wist not who it was: for Jesus had conveyed himself away, a multitude being in *that* place.

a. To worship in the temple

b. To remember his healing

c. To stop sinning

d. To fear the judgment

14 Afterward Jesus findeth him in the temple, and said unto him, Behold, thou art made whole: sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee.

6. **Scene 5: The religionists against Jesus—a picture of the world rejecting God’s Son, the Savior²** 15 The man departed, and told the Jews that it was Jesus, which had made him whole.

a. The religionists heard of Jesus’ work, 16 And therefore did the Jews persecute Jesus, and sought to slay him, because he had done these things on the sabbath day.
v.15

b. The religionists reacted & sought to kill Jesus

A. **The Essential Authority: Power to Meet the World’s Desperate Needs, 5:1–16**

(5:1–47) **DIVISION OVERVIEW: Jesus, Authority:** Chapter 5 reveals Jesus to be the Authority over all of life. He is due the same worship, obedience, and service as God; for He is equal with God (Jn. 5:17–18). As God possesses life within Himself, so Jesus possesses life within Himself (Jn. 5:26). As God has authority over all of life, so Jesus has authority over all of life.

In revealing His authority, Jesus first demonstrated the truth of His authority. He healed a man who had been ill for thirty-eight years—and He healed him on the Sabbath. Both acts pictured the truth of His authority. The healing of the man showed His authority over the physical world, and the breaking of the Jewish Sabbath law showed His authority to determine the rules of worship. After demonstrating the truth of His equality with God, He then began to teach the truth. This procedure, first demonstrating some truth and then teaching it, was to be followed time and again as Jesus revealed who He was throughout the Gospel of John. (See Chapters 6, 8.)

(5:1–16) **Introduction—Sabbath:** through this healing miracle, Jesus was claiming to have supreme authority over the Sabbath (see Deeper Study # 1, *Sabbath*—Mt. 12:1; see Jn. 5:9–10, 16, 18). However, there are also other striking lessons: the Lord’s compassion (vv.6–9), the problem of formal religion (vv.10–12), and the charge to a converted man (vv.13–14).

1. Jesus attended a Jewish feast in Jerusalem (v.1).
2. Scene 1: the diseased and the ill—a picture of the world’s desperate need (vv.2–4).
3. Scene 2: Jesus and the man—a picture of Jesus’ power to meet the world’s need (vv.5–9).
4. Scene 3: the religionists and the man—a picture of dead religion trying to meet the world’s need (vv.10–12).
5. Scene 4: Jesus and the man after his healing—a picture of the believer’s responsibility (vv.13–14).
6. Scene 5: the religionists against Jesus—a picture of the world rejecting God’s Son, the Savior (vv.15–16).

1 (5:1) Feasts—Jesus Christ, Worship of God: Jesus attended a Jewish feast in Jerusalem. The feast is not named, but it was probably one of the three Feasts of Obligation: the Passover, the Feast of Tabernacles, or Pentecost. These were called Feasts of Obligations because every male Jew who lived within twenty miles of Jerusalem was required by law to attend them. It is significant that Jesus was seen attending the feast.

a. It gave Him an opportunity to reach a large number of people. Most of the people who attended the feast would be God-fearing people and have their minds upon God; therefore, they would be more prepared for the gospel.

b. It gave Him an opportunity to teach people to be faithful to the worship of God. He, the Son of God Himself, was faithful.

Thought 1. If Jesus Himself, the Son of God, was faithful in worshipping God the Father, how much more should we be faithful in our worship of God?

2 (5:2–4) Needy, The: the first scene was that of the diseased and the ill. These—the diseased and the ill—picture those in the world who are gripped by desperate need. The setting is a pool by a sheep market. The word *market* is supplied by the translator; it is not in the Greek text. It may have been a sheep market or sheep gate or sheep stall where the animals were kept. Whatever it was, there was a pool to provide water for the animals to drink and five porches to provide a resting area for the comfort of the people. The pool and a “great multitude of impotent folk” lying around the pool were the focus of attention.

a. Note their need—which is a picture of all in the world who live in desperate need, all who are blind, lame, or withered spiritually.

⇒ There were the blind who could not see.

⇒ There were the lame who could not walk.

⇒ There were the withered who were deformed and paralyzed.

⇒ There were so many who were poor and beggarly.

“My soul is weary of my life; I will leave my complaint upon myself; I will speak in the bitterness of my soul” (Jb. 10:1).

“For my life is spent with grief, and my years with sighing: my strength faileth because of mine iniquity, and my bones are consumed” (Ps. 31:10).

“O my God, my soul is cast down within me” (Ps. 42:6).

“I sink in deep mire, where there is no standing: I am come into deep waters, where the floods overflow me” (Ps. 69:2).

“But as for me, my feet were almost gone; my steps had well-nigh slipped” (Ps. 73:2).

“When I thought to know this, it was too painful for me” (Ps. 73:16).

“By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down, yea, we wept, when we remembered Zion” (Ps. 137:1).

“The Lord hath forsaken me, and my Lord hath forgotten me” (Is. 49:14).

“Withhold thy foot from being unshod, and thy throat from thirst: but thou saidst, There is no hope: no; for I have loved strangers, and after them will I go” (Je. 2:25).

“But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep [dead], that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope” (1 Th. 4:13).

“That at that time ye were without Christ ... having no hope, and without God in the world” (Ep. 2:12).

b. Note their desperate hope and faith. Either the description given in Scripture is to be taken literally or else men of that day gave their explanation as to what caused the pool to be *troubled*. If this account is man’s description of what happened at the pool, then there was apparently a subterranean pocket of energy, either air or a stream underneath the pool that caused the pool to occasionally bubble up. The people of that day, grasping for something to help them in their daily lives, said that a supernatural occurrence was happening when the water bubbled. An angel was thought to be swimming around in the water. The first person to move into the water after the bubbling was believed to be healed.

Thought 1. Men are always grasping for something to help them in their daily lives. It may be some *supernatural or destined power* in a pool of water or in the astrology of stars above or in some magical person on earth. Men never change, regardless of the generation. In their grasp for help in life, they continue to seek everywhere except in Christ, the Son of God Himself. They hope and put their faith in everything except Him.

“There is a way which seemeth right unto a man; but the end thereof are the ways of death” (Pr. 14:12).

3 (5:5–9) Jesus Christ, Compassion—Power—Healing—Faith—Obedience: the second scene was that of Jesus and the man. This is a picture of Jesus, who has the power to meet the needs of the desperate in the world. The outline of this point is adequate to see what happened.

a. The man’s plight. He was either paralyzed or lame; he had been that way for thirty-eight *long* years.

b. Jesus’ *compassion*: it was heart-warming, touching, and revealing—demonstrating how He wants to reach out to every person. He *saw* the man lying there and *knew* all about his desperate condition. Note the striking point: it was Jesus who initiated the relationship, approaching the man and reaching out to help Him.

Thought 1. Jesus *sees* and *knows* every man’s condition. He reaches out to every man in compassion, offering help. He reaches out through ...

- the message of the Word
- the witness of family or friend
- the beauty of nature
- the thoughts about God that penetrate every man’s mind

“Who shall separate us from the love [compassion] of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?” (Ro. 8:35).

“For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin” (He. 4:15).

“Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you” (1 Pe. 5:7).

“For he remembered that they were but flesh; a wind that passeth away, and cometh not again” (Ps. 78:39).

“Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him” (Ps. 103:13).

“But the mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him, and his righteousness unto children’s children” (Ps. 103:17).

“In all their affliction he was afflicted, and the angel of his presence saved them: in his love and in his pity he redeemed them; and he bare them, and carried them all the days of old” (Is. 63:9).

“It is of the Lord’S mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not” (Lam. 3:22).

c. The man’s helplessness. He was all alone in this world, having no family or friend who could help him.

d. The Lord’s power. This is a significant point: the man did not know he was healed *until he obeyed* the command of the Lord. Jesus did not pronounce a “word of healing”; He merely commanded the man to act. In the act the man was to show his faith. *If he believed*, he would arise and walk; *if he did not believe*, he would simply lie there, continuing on just as he had always done. (See Deeper Study # 2—Jn. 2:24.)

Thought 1. No man has to continue on and on through life just as he has always been, enslaved to the sin and corruption and desperate needs of the world. He can experience the healing power of Jesus Christ, the power to change his life and make him into a new man. All he has to do is one simple thing: believe the Word of Jesus Christ enough to obey, doing exactly what Jesus says. It is a clear fact: if we believe Him, we obey Him; if we do not believe Him, we do not obey Him. To be made whole and changed into a new man—a new man who is freed from the sin and desperate needs of this corruptible world—we have to believe Him enough to obey Him. (See note—Jn. 4:50 for more verses of Scripture.)

“For with God nothing shall be impossible” (Lu. 1:37).

“And when he saw them, he said unto them, Go show yourselves unto the priests. And it came to pass, that, as they went, they were cleansed” (Lu. 17:14).

“And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him” (He. 5:9).

“Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone” (Js. 2:17).

e. The sinister problem: Jesus had healed the man on the Sabbath. By healing the man on the Sabbath, Jesus was breaking the Jewish ceremonial law; He was committing a serious sin, violating a ritual and rule of religion. The rest of the man’s story centers upon this fact.

4 (5:10–12) Religion: the third scene was that of the religionists and the man. This is a picture of dead religion trying to meet the world’s desperate need. Note three things.

a. Dead religion is a religion of legalism. The religionists were trying to meet the needs of people through rules and regulations, ceremony and rituals. (See Deeper Study # 1—Lu. 6:2; Deeper Study # 2—Jn. 5:15–16.) They were more concerned with the man who was violating the ritual of the Sabbath than with the man who was suffering in a pitiful condition.

b. Dead religion is a religion ignorant of true authority. They should have known that the power of God had healed the man and should have been eager to share with the man Jesus, the man upon whom such power rested. But note: they cared little about the power of God and His messenger. They cared only that the status quo be maintained, that their religious practices continue as they were and not be violated. Their thoughts were upon their own religious position and security. (See Deeper Study # 2—Jn. 5:15–16 for discussion.)

c. Dead religion is a religion blind to love and good. Note the question of the religionists. It was not, “Who is the man who has healed and helped you so much?” but, “Who is the man that broke the religious law?” They did not see the good that had been done. They saw only that their position and security were threatened, that someone had more power and influence, doing more good than they were.

Thought 1. How many true messengers of God are criticized by powerless religionists, criticized because they do things differently or do more good than others? Men fear the loss of their position and security, fear that people may begin to wonder about their lack of true power—power that honestly helps men.

“But if ye had known what this meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice, ye would not have condemned the guiltless. For the Son of man is Lord even of the sabbath day” (Mt. 12:7–8).

“Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself” (Mt. 22:39).

“And he said unto them, Full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition” (Mk. 7:9).

“Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law” (Ro. 13:10).

“They profess that they know God; but in works they deny him, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate” (Tit. 1:16).

“Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. But whoso hath this world’s good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?” (1 Jn. 3:16–17).

Deeper Study # 1

(5:10) **Jews:** the Jews (Ioudaio) are spoken of some seventy times in the Gospels. They are always spoken of as the opposition to Jesus Christ—as those who set themselves against Him. They include some Pharisees, Sadducees, Scribes, priests, and secular leaders. They were the religionists and leaders who personally refused to believe Jesus Christ. They rejected both His claim to be the Son of God and His offer of salvation and eternal life (see Jn. 1:10–11, 19. See Subject Index.)

5 (5:13–14) Follow-up—Maturity—Growth: the fourth scene was that of Jesus and the man after healing. This is a picture of the believer’s responsibility. Note that Jesus had left the man right after healing him because of the large crowd on the porches. For some unstated reason, Jesus did not want to attract a crowd at this time. The point is striking: Jesus sought the man out again! Remember, Jesus had reached out to save the man; now He was reaching out for another purpose. When He found the man, a picture of the believer’s responsibility was painted.

a. There was the duty to worship. Jesus found the man in the temple worshipping and giving thanks to God.

“Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching” (He. 10:25).

“Give unto the Lord the glory due unto his name: bring an offering, and come before him: worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness” (1 Chr. 16:29).

“Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever” (Ps. 23:6).

“Blessed is the man whom thou choosest, and causest to approach unto thee, that he may dwell in thy courts: we shall be satisfied with the goodness of thy house, even of thy holy temple” (Ps. 65:4).

“My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the courts of the Lord: my heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God” (Ps. 84:2).

“Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise: be thankful unto him, and bless his name” (Ps. 100:4).

b. There was the duty to remember his healing, his salvation. The moment should never be forgotten or lost (see 2 Pe. 1:9).

“Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light” (Col. 1:12).

“Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ” (Ep. 5:20).

“In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you” (1 Th. 5:18).

“Only take heed to thyself, and keep thy soul diligently, lest thou forget the things which thine eyes have seen, and lest they depart from thy heart all the days of thy life: but teach them thy sons, and thy sons’ sons” (De. 4:9).

c. There was the duty to sin no more. Apparently the man had been lame or paralyzed because of some accident caused by sin. Jesus cautioned the man: “Sin no more.”

Thought 1. How many are physically crippled or diseased because of some sin? Many suffer *crippling accidents and diseases* because of sin such as drunkenness, immorality, or driving over the speed limit.

“She said, No man, Lord. and Jesus said unto her, Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more” (Jn. 8:11).

“Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof” (Ro. 6:12).

“Awake to righteousness, and sin not; for some have not the knowledge of God: I speak this to your shame” (1 Co. 15:34).

“Wash you, make you clean, put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil” (Is. 1:16).

d. There was the duty to fear the judgment. Jesus warned the man that if he did not repent and turn from his sin, he would face a more terrible judgment than his crippling paralysis.

6 (5:15–16) Jesus Christ, Rejection: the fifth scene was that of the religionists and Jesus. This is a picture of the world rejecting God’s Savior. Note two things.

a. The man told the religionists who had healed him. He did not do this to bring harm to Jesus. He thought the religionists should know and would want to benefit from knowing Jesus personally.

b. The reason the religionists opposed Jesus needs to be studied closely (see note—Jn. 5:17–18 for discussion).

Deeper Study # 2

(5:15–16) Religionists—Rules and Regulations—Jesus Christ, Opposed: breaking the Sabbath law was a serious matter to the Jew. Just how serious can be seen in the strict demands governing the Sabbath. Law after law was written to govern all activity on the Sabbath. A person could not travel, fast, cook, buy, sell, draw water, walk beyond a certain distance, lift anything, fight in a war, or heal on the Sabbath unless life was at stake. A person was not to contemplate any kind of work or activity. A good example of the legal restriction and the people’s loyalty to it is seen in the women who witnessed Jesus’ crucifixion. They would not even walk to His tomb to prepare the body for burial until the Sabbath was over (Mk. 16:1f; Mt. 28:1f).

It was a serious matter to break the Sabbath law. A person was condemned, and if the offense were serious enough, the person was to die.

The leaders’ conflict with Jesus over religious beliefs and rules is sometimes thought by modern man to be petty and harsh, or else such conflicts are just not understood. Three facts will help in understanding why the conflicts happened and were life-threatening, ending in the murder of Jesus Christ.

1. The Jewish nation had been held together by their religious beliefs. Through the centuries the Jewish people had been conquered by army after army, and by the millions they had been deported and scattered over the world. Even in the day of Jesus they were enslaved by Rome. Their religion was the *binding force* that kept Jews together, in particular ...

- their belief that God had called them to be a distinctive people (who worshipped the only true and living God)

- their rules governing the Sabbath and the temple
- their laws governing intermarriage, worship, and cleansing
- their rules governing what foods they could and could not eat

Their religious beliefs and rules protected them from alien beliefs and from being swallowed up by other nationalities through intermarriage. Their religion was what maintained their distinctiveness as a people and as a nation. Jewish leaders knew this. They knew that *their religion was the binding force* that held their nation together. They therefore opposed anyone or anything that threatened or attempted to break the laws of their religion and nation.

2. Many of the religionists were men of deep, deep conviction, strong in their beliefs. Therefore, they became steeped in religious belief and practice, law and custom, tradition and ritual, ceremony and liturgy, rules and regulations. To break any law or rule governing any belief or practice was a serious offense, for it taught loose behavior. And loose behavior, once it had spread enough, would weaken their religion. Therefore, in their minds Jesus was committing a terrible offense by breaking their law. He was weakening their religion and threatening their nation.

3. The religionists were men who had profession, position, recognition, esteem, livelihood, and security. Anyone who went contrary to what they believed and taught was a threat to all they had. Some religionists undoubtedly felt that Jesus was a threat to them. Every time Jesus broke their law, they felt He was undermining their very position and security. (See notes—Mt. 12:1–8; 16:1–12; 21:23; 22:15–22; 22:23–33; 22:34–40; 23:1–12.)

The error of the religionists was fourfold.

1. They misinterpreted and corrupted God’s Word (see notes—Mt. 12:1–3; Deeper Study # 1—Jn. 4:22; cp. Ro. 9:4).
2. They committed serious sin after sin in God’s eyes (see notes—1 Th. 2:15–16; see Ro. 2:17–29).
3. They rejected God’s way of righteousness, God’s Messiah, who is Jesus Christ (see notes—Ro. 11:28–29; 1 Th. 2:15–16; see Ro. 10:1–21, esp. 1–4, 19–21).
4. They allowed religion in its tradition and ritual, ceremony and rules to become more important than meeting the basic needs of human life: the need for God and the need for spiritual, mental, and physical health. Being the true Messiah, Jesus was bound to expose such error. Therefore, the battle lines were drawn.

The Messiah had to liberate people from such enslaving behavior. He had to liberate them so they could be saved and worship God in freedom of spirit.

The religionists had to oppose anyone who broke their law. They had to oppose Jesus because He was a threat to their nation and to their own personal position and security.

The religionists’ attack took two forms.

1. First, they tried to discredit Jesus so the multitudes would stop following Him (see Mt. 21:46).

“And they asked him, saying; Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath days? that they might accuse Him” (Mt. 12:10).

“And the scribes and Pharisees watched him, whether he would heal on the sabbath day; that they might find an accusation against him” (Lu. 6:7).

“Then went the Pharisees, and took counsel how they might entangle him in his talk. And they sent out unto him their disciples with the Herodians, saying, Master, we know that thou art true, and teachest the way of God in truth, neither carest thou for any man: for thou regardest not the person of men. Tell us therefore, What thinkest thou? Is it lawful to give tribute unto Caesar, or not?” (Mt. 22:15–17).

2. Second, failing to discredit Jesus, they sought some way to kill Him.

“The Pharisees went out, and held a council against Him, how they might destroy Him” (Mt. 12:14; see Mt. 26:3–4).

“And the chief priests and scribes sought how they might kill him: for they feared the people” (Lu. 22:2).

“Therefore the Jews sought the more to kill him, because he not only had broken the sabbath, but said also that God was his Father, making himself equal with God” (Jn. 5:18; see Jn. 7:1; 7:19–20, 25).

B. The Astounding Authority: Equality with God, 5:17–30

- | | |
|---|--|
| <p>1. Jesus claimed equality with God</p> <p>a. His claim: Called God “My Father”</p> <p>b. His claim clearly understood</p> | <p>17 But Jesus answered them, My Father worketh hitherto, and I work.</p> <p>18 Therefore the Jews sought the more to kill him, because he not only had broken the sabbath, but said also that God was his Father, making himself equal with God.</p> |
| <p>2. Proof 1: His obedience</p> <p>a. He did not act alone</p> <p>b. He did exactly what He saw the Father do</p> | <p>19 Then answered Jesus and said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do: for what things soever he doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise.</p> |

- 3. Proof 2: His great works**
- a. God loves His Son
 - b. God shows Him what to do
- 20 For the Father loveth the Son, and showeth him all things that himself doeth: and he will show him greater works than these, that ye may marvel.
- 4. Proof 3: His power to quicken, to give life, to raise people from the dead**
- 21 For as the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth *them*; even so the Son quickeneth whom he will.
- 5. Proof 4: His control over the whole judicial process of judgment**
- a. The purpose: That all may honor the Son
 - b. The fact: If Christ is not honored, God is not honored
- 22 For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son:
- 23 That all *men* should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father. He that honoureth not the Son honoureth not the Father which hath sent him.
- 6. Proof 5: His power over people's destiny, to save people from death**
- a. How men are saved
 - 1) Hearing His Word
 - 2) Believing that God sent His Son, Jesus
 - b. The result: Eternal life
 - c. The facts: The spiritually dead can hear the voice of God's Son & live—now
- 24 Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.
- 25 Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live.
- 7. Proof 6: His energy of life, His self-existence**
- 26 For as the Father hath life in himself; so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself;

8. **Proof 7: His authority to execute judgment** 27 And hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man.
9. **Proof 8: His claim to be the Son of Man**
10. **Proof 9: His power to resurrect all people from the grave** 28 Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice,
- a. People who have done good: Resurrected to life 29 And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.
- b. People who have done evil: Resurrected to condemnation
- c. The judgment: Will be a just judgment 30 I can of mine own self do nothing: as I hear, I judge: and my judgment is just; because I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me.

B. The Astounding Authority: Equality with God, 5:17–30

(5:17–30) **Jesus Christ, Claims—Deity:** all men have to face this earth-shaking, shattering claim of Christ. He made the astounding claim that all authority belonged to Him. How could He make such an astounding claim? Because He proclaimed that He possessed equality with God and then He proceeded to give proof after proof which unequivocally verified His claim.

1. Jesus claimed equality with God (vv.17–18).
2. Proof 1: His obedience (v.19).
3. Proof 2: His great works (v.20).
4. Proof 3: His power to quicken and to give life, to raise from the dead (v.21).
5. Proof 4: His control over the whole judicial process of judgment (vv.22–23).
6. Proof 5: His power over people’s destiny, to save people from death (vv.24–25).
7. Proof 6: His energy of life, His self-existence (v.26).
8. Proof 7: His authority to execute judgment (v.27).
9. Proof 8: His claim to be the Son of Man (v.27).
10. Proof 9: His power to resurrect all people from the grave (vv.28–30).

1 (5:17–18) Jesus Christ, Claims—Deity—Religionists, Opposed Christ: Jesus claimed equality with God. Note the astounding claim: He called God “My Father” not “our Father.” Jesus was claiming a unique relationship, a Father-Son union with God; and note: the shattering fact was *clearly understood* by the religionists. They understood clearly ...

- that He had said God was *His Father*. (See “His own Son” Ro. 8:32.)
- that He was making Himself equal with God. (See “Equal to God,” Ph. 2:6.)

His claim was unquestionable. They knew exactly what He was claiming. (See note—Jn. 1:34 for more discussion.)

A second claim was this: Jesus said, “My Father worketh hitherto” (*heos arti ergazetai*), which means “My Father keeps on working even until now.” That is, God never ceases to work, even on the Sabbath (Sunday). It is true that when God created the world, Scripture says He rested on the Sabbath day; but this means He rested from His creative work, not from His other work. His work of love and mercy, helping and caring (compassion), looking after and overseeing (sovereignty) continued. Note: Jesus said, “And I work,” meaning that He did good on the Sabbath as well as God. Again, He was claiming to be equal with God, claiming to have the same right to work even as God works: that is, to erase the wrong laws of men and to establish the just and compassionate laws of God.

It was for these two reasons that the religionists sought to kill Jesus.

- a. He clearly said, “My Father,” claiming that God was His Father and making Himself *equal* with God. He was clearly claiming that He was “*the Son of God*,” “the only begotten Son of God” (see Jn. 3:16).
- b. He broke the law against working on the Sabbath (Sunday), claiming that He had the same authority as God, the authority to do good on the Sabbath: to be compassionate by teaching and helping and caring for men.

Thought 1. A person either accepts the claim of Jesus to be equal with God or else he rejects the claim. The claim was clearly made. There is no longer a middle ground upon which men can stand. Man is now forced to make a decision.

Thought 2. Some take the words and behavior of Jesus on the Sabbath as the approval for working on Sunday. This is false reasoning. Jesus was not violating nor erasing the Lord’s day as the day for man’s rest and worship. Just the opposite is true. He was saying that the day was to be used for compassion and mercy and good, helping men in their needs.

2 (5:19) Obedience—Jesus Christ, Nature—Deity: the first proof that Jesus was equal with God was His obedience. Jesus stated two astounding facts.

- a. He did not act alone. He did not act independently of God (cp. Jn. 5:30; 7:28; 8:28; 14:10). He was not disobedient to God. He did not ...
 - take His life into His own hands
 - do His own thing
 - act selfishly

- walk separately from God

Note the stress, the crucial importance of this point. Jesus said, “Verily, verily”; that is, listen, listen. Pay close attention to what is said.

b. He did exactly what He saw the Father do. There was no divergence whatsoever between the Father and Jesus. There are three claims here.

⇒ Jesus was in *perfect, unbroken communion* with God.

⇒ Jesus was of the very *same nature and person* as God.

⇒ Jesus *acted as God because He was God*: He did exactly what God did. He did “the very same things” (tauta) in “the very same manner” (homoios). He acted and behaved exactly as God acted and behaved.

Jesus Christ was perfectly obedient; He acted exactly in the nature of God. (What a lesson *on* obedience! A challenge *for* obedience!)

“All things are delivered unto me of my Father: and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him” (Mt. 11:27).

“But I know him: for I am from him, and he hath sent me” (Jn. 7:29).

“Yet ye have not known him; but I know him: and if I should say, I know him not, I shall be a liar like unto you: but I know him, and keep his saying” (Jn. 8:55).

“As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father: and I lay down my life for the sheep” (Jn. 10:15).

“I and my Father are one” (Jn. 10:30).

“If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not. But if I do, though ye believe not me, believe the works: that ye may know, and believe, that the Father is in me, and I in him” (Jn. 10:37–38).

“Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? the words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works” (Jn. 14:10).

“And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are” (Jn. 17:11).

“That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one” (Jn. 17:21–22).

“O righteous Father, the world hath not known thee: but I have known thee, and these have known that thou hast sent me” (Jn. 17:25).

3 (5:20) Jesus Christ, Deity—Works: the second proof that Jesus was equal with God was His great works. Two astounding statements were made. (See note—Jn. 5:36 for more discussion.)

a. The Father loves the Son. The idea is that the Father continues to love and never stops loving the Son. There is never a moment when the love diminishes. It is a perfect love that never ceases to give.

“Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again” (Jn. 10:17).

“For the Father himself loveth you, because ye have loved me, and have believed that I came out from God” (Jn. 16:27).

“I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me” (Jn. 17:23).

“And I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare it: that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them” (Jn. 17:26).

“While he yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him” (Mt. 17:5).

“And straightway coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens opened, and the Spirit like a dove descending upon him: and there came a voice from heaven, saying, Thou art my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased” (Mk. 1:10–11).

“To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved” (Ep. 1:6).

“Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son” (Col. 1:13).

“Christ glorified not himself to be made an high priest; but he that said unto him, Thou art my Son, to day have I begotten thee” (He. 5:5).

“He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him” (Jn. 14:21; see Jn. 14:23).

“As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you: continue ye in my love” (Jn. 15:9).

b. Therefore, the Father showed the Son all things which He did.

- 1) All things which Jesus did were the very things which the Father did.
- 2) Jesus said that the Father was going to show Him greater things to do, greater things than the healing of the paralyzed man (vv.8–9). Jesus would be ...
 - controlling the forces of nature (storms on the Sea of Galilee)
 - multiplying food
 - raising the dead and healing multitudes of people
 - instituting a greater law, the law of the Son of Man. (See note—Mt. 5:17–18.)
 - instituting new ordinances
 - creating people anew

“But I have greater witness than that of John: for the works which the Father hath given me to finish, the same works that I do, bear witness of me, that the Father hath sent me” (Jn. 5:36).

“I must work the works of him that sent him, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work” (Jn. 9:4).

“Jesus answered them, I told you, and ye believed not: the works that I do in my Father’s name, they bear witness of me” (Jn. 10:25).

“If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not. But if I do, though ye believe not me, believe the works: that ye may know, and believe, that the Father is in me, and I in him” (Jn. 10:37–38).

“Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? the words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works. Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me: or else believe me for the very works’ sake” (Jn. 14:10–11).

“If I had not done among them the works which none other man did, they had not had sin: but now have they both seen and hated both me and my Father” (Jn. 15:24).

4 (5:21) Jesus Christ, Deity—Life—Salvation—Resurrection: the third proof that Jesus was equal with God was His power to give life.

a. God gives life, and only God *can* give life. Therefore if He wishes to give life to a dead body, He can. In giving life and raising the dead, God ...

- is sovereign, acting fully as He alone wills
- is not constrained nor restrained
- has the power and authority
- exercises perfect love, justice, and wisdom. He knows exactly what He is doing, and He does it perfectly

b. The Son, Jesus Christ, gives life to whom *He wills*. Just as God does, so Christ does. Christ is equal with God in giving life and raising the dead. Note ...

- there is a state of death (see Deeper Study # 1—He. 9:27).
- there is a state of life, of being quickened, of being made alive from the dead. (See Ep. 2:1f.)

Christ quickens and gives life to a person when that person believes on Him, and the life which He gives is both abundant and eternal (see note—Jn. 3:16).

“But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins, (then saith he to the sick of the palsy,) Arise, take up thy bed, and go unto thine house” (Mt. 9:6).

“And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth” (Mt. 28:18).

“As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him” (Jn. 17:2).

“But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you” (Ro. 8:11).

“And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins” (Ep. 2:1; see vv.2–3).

“But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: that in the ages to come he might show the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus. For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast” (Ep. 2:4–9)

“And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses” (Col. 2:13).

5 (5:22–23) Jesus Christ, Deity—Judgment—Honor, of Jesus Christ—Relationship, To God: the fourth proof that Jesus was equal with God was His control over the whole judicial process. Most men think that God (the Father) will judge the world and that they will have to stand before God in the day of judgment. But not so, Jesus says. He claims that God will judge *“no man, but [He] hath committed all judgment unto the Son.”* The scene is the picture of a supreme court—not just the supreme court of a nation, but the supreme court of the universe presided over by Jesus Christ.

“Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead” (Ac. 17:31).

“And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats” (Mt. 25:32).

“And he commanded us to preach unto the people, and to testify that it is he which was ordained of God to be the Judge of quick [the living] and dead” (Ac. 10:42).

“Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead” (Ac. 17:31).

“In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel” (Ro. 2:16).

“But why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ” (Ro. 14:10).

“Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts: and then shall every man have praise of God” (1 Co. 4:5).

“I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom” (2 Ti. 4:1).

“[Men] who shall give account to him that is ready to judge the quick and the dead” (1 Pe. 4:5).

a. The purpose for all judgment being given to Christ is onefold: God has willed that all men honor the Son just as they honor Him. The idea is that God has determined that men will *keep on honoring the Son* with the very same honor and worship they give Him. (This is seen in the Greek tense which is *present active* subjective.)

b. This is a truth that shatters men, for it means that if a man does not honor Christ, he does not honor God; and if he does not worship Christ, he does not worship God.

“He that hateth me hateth my Father also” (Jn. 15:23).

“Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father: [but] he that acknowledgeth the Son hath the Father also” (1 Jn. 2:23).

“He that despiseth me despiseth Him that sent me” (Lu. 10:16).

“Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation; of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels” (Mk. 8:38).

“Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son” (1 Jn. 2:22).

6 (5:24–25) Jesus Christ, Deity—Salvation—Sin—Death: the fifth proof that Jesus was equal with God was His power over people’s destiny, the power to save people from death. Note three significant points.

a. How men are saved.

1) They are saved by hearing Jesus’ Word. The idea is *commitment and obedience* to it. In order to be saved, men must hear and follow Jesus’ Word, doing exactly as He says.

2) They are saved by believing God, that is, by believing that God has sent His Son Jesus Christ to save them.

“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life” (Jn. 3:16).

“But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us” (Ro. 5:8).

b. The result of being saved: eternal life. A man passes from the state of death into the state of life, from the state of condemnation into the state of justification. When a man is truly saved, he is never condemned to die; he is declared righteous and given eternal life. Note the descriptive way of expressing it: “is *passed* from death to life.” Note also that man is presently in a *state of death*; that is, man is in the process of dying. Man *must die and will die*. He cannot stop the process. (See Deeper Study # 1—He. 9:27. See Ep. 2:1, 5; 5:14.)

c. The facts are twofold. The hour has come and now is ...

- when the spiritually dead *can hear* the voice of the Son of God
- when the spiritually dead, who hear, *can live*

“For he saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succoured thee: behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation” (2 Co. 6:2).

“He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him” (Jn. 3:36).

Deeper Study # 1

(5:25) **Jesus Christ, Son of God:** there are three places in the Gospel of John where Jesus calls Himself the Son of God (Jn. 5:25; 10:36; 11:4; see Jn. 19:7). Note also the claim to be the Son (Jn. 5:19–23, 26; 6:40; 8:35–36; 14:13; 19:1). John’s stated purpose should also be noted at this point.

“But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name” (Jn. 20:31).

7 (5:26) Jesus Christ, Deity—Life, Source: the sixth proof that Jesus was equal with God was His energy of life, His self-existence. God is the ...

- Energy of life
- Power of life
- Being of life
- Possessor of life
- Source of life
- Essence of life
- Sovereign of life
- Self-existent life

God has life within Himself. And note: God has given the very same energy of life to the Son. Jesus Christ possesses “the very being” of life, the power and energy of self-existence within Himself.

The implication is clear: Jesus Christ has the *power* to give everlasting life to those who hear Him and believe on God.

“And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul” (Ge. 2:7).

“That thou mayest love the Lord thy God, and that thou mayest obey his voice, and that thou mayest cleave unto him: for he is thy life, and the length of thy days” (De. 30:20).

“The Spirit of God hath made me, and the breath of the Almighty hath given me life” (Jb. 33:4).

“The Lord is the strength of my life” (Ps. 27:1).

“For with thee is the fountain of life” (Ps. 36:9).

“Yet the Lord will command his lovingkindness in the daytime, and in the night his song shall be with me, and my prayer unto the God of my life” (Ps. 42:8).

“[God] holdeth our soul in life” (Ps. 66:9).

“In him was life; and the life was the light of men” (Jn. 1:4).

“I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly” (Jn. 10:10).

“Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live” (Jn. 11:25).

“Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me” (Jn. 14:6).

“That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord” (Ro. 5:21).

“But is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel” (2 Ti. 1:10).

“He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life” (1 Jn. 5:12).

8 (5:27) Jesus Christ, Deity—Judgment—Sympathy: the seventh proof that Jesus was equal with God was His authority to execute judgment. Jesus Christ is the Son of Man, having lived just as all sons of men live. He walked through life as Man, bearing all the weight and pressure, trials and temptations, sufferings and death, joys and victories that men experience. He knows every facet and fiber of human life; therefore, He is able to execute perfect judgment. For this reason, God has given Him the right and the authority to judge men. (See note, *Son of Man*—Jn. 1:51.)

9 (5:27) Jesus Christ, Deity—Son of Man: the eighth proof that Jesus was equal with God was His claim to be the Son of Man. This was Jesus’ favorite description of Himself (see notes, *Son of Man*—Jn. 1:51 for discussion. See 3:13–14; 5:27; 6:27, 53, 62; 8:28; 9:35; 12:3–34; 13:31.)

10 (5:28–30) Resurrection, the—Judgment: the ninth proof that Jesus was equal with God was His power to resurrect all people from the grave. Note several facts.

a. It is the voice—the Word, the power of Jesus—that shall resurrect “all that are in the graves.”

b. “All that are in the graves” shall be resurrected. Not a single one will be left in the earth. Everyone “shall come forth.”

c. “The hour is coming” when all shall be resurrected. The hour is set, fixed, already determined.

d. Men are to “marvel not at this.” It is not incredible or ridiculous, for *God is*; He does exist, and He has a plan for the world. The world has not just happened. Life has not happened by chance, without purpose and meaning beyond a few brief years. Life is not doomed, without hope, destined to despair and dirt. There is meaning, purpose, and significance, both to life and to the world.

e. Men who have done good shall “come forth to the resurrection of life.” How one lives matters. The man who professes and lives for God will take part in the resurrection of life, but they who have done

evil will “come forth to the resurrection of damnation” (judgment, condemnation, see Jn. 3:17). What a person has professed will not matter. All that will matter will be how a person has lived. Has he lived righteously and godly in this present world—believing on Christ and serving Him? Believing on Christ means that a person has committed His life to follow Christ, to obey and serve Him (see note—Jn. 2:2).

Thought 1. Note two critical facts about the resurrection.

(1) There is to be a resurrection of all who have believed and obeyed the Lord Jesus Christ.

“Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live” (Jn. 5:25).

“And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day” (Jn. 6:40).

“Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live” (Jn. 11:25).

“For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive” (1 Co. 15:22).

“Knowing that he which raised up the Lord Jesus shall raise up us also by Jesus, and shall present us with you” (2 Co. 4:14).

“For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord” (1 Th. 4:16–17).

“But God will redeem my soul from the power of the grave: for he shall receive me” (Ps. 49:15).

“Thou, which hast showed me great and sore troubles, shalt quicken me again, and shalt bring me up again from the depths of the earth” (Ps. 71:20).

“I will ransom them from the power of the grave; I will redeem them from death: O death, I will be thy plagues; O grave, I will be thy destruction” (Ho. 13:14).

(2) There is to be a resurrection not only of believers but also of all those who have rejected and disobeyed the Lord Jesus Christ.

“Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation” (Jn. 5:28–29).

“And have hope toward God, which they themselves also allow, that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust” (Acts 24:15).

“And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt” (Da. 12:2).

f. The judgment of Christ will be a *just* judgment. He will judge precisely as He “hears,” exactly as *God wills*. He hears and does the will of God perfectly; therefore, He will hear God and execute God’s

judgment exactly as He wills. Only men who have lived godly lives will take part in the “resurrection of life.” All others will come forth to the “resurrection of damnation.”

“For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works” (Mt. 16:27).

“Who will render to every man according to his deed” (Ro. 2:6).

“For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad” (2 Co. 5:10).

“And if ye call on the Father, who without respect of persons judgeth according to every man’s work, pass the time of your sojourning here in fear” (1 Pe. 1:17).

“And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire” (Re. 20:12–15).

“And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be” (Re. 22:12).

“Also unto thee, O Lord, belongeth mercy: for thou renderest to every man according to his work” (Ps. 62:12).

“I the Lord search the heart, I try the reins, even to give every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings” (Je. 17:10).

C. The Five Witnesses to Jesus’ Authority & Power, 5:31–39

1. The fact: One’s own testimony must be supported by other witnesses 31 If I bear witness of myself, my witness is not true.

2. The first witness: The Holy Spirit within Jesus 32 There is another that beareth witness of me; and I know that the witness which he witnesseth of me is true.

3. The second witness: John the Baptist 33 Ye sent unto John, and he bare witness unto the truth.

34 But I receive not testimony from man: but these things I say, that ye might be saved.

35 He was a burning and a shining light: and ye were willing for a season to rejoice in his light.

4. **The third witness: Miraculous works** 36 But I have greater witness than *that* of John: for the works which the Father hath given me to finish, the same works that I do, bear witness of me, that the Father hath sent me.

5. **The fourth witness: God Himself^t** 37 And the Father himself, which hath sent me, hath borne witness of me. Ye have neither heard his voice at any time, nor seen his shape.

38 And ye have not his word abiding in you: for whom he hath sent, him ye believe not.

6. **The fifth witness: The Scriptures** 39 Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me.

C. The Five Witnesses to Jesus' Authority and Power, 5:31–39

(5:31–39) **Introduction:** there are five witnesses to Jesus' authority.

1. The fact: one's own testimony must be supported by other witnesses (v.31).
2. The first witness: the Holy Spirit within Jesus (v.32).
3. The second witness: John the Baptist (vv.33–35).
4. The third witness: miraculous works (v.36).
5. The fourth witness: God Himself (vv.37–38).
6. The fifth witness: the Scriptures (v.39).

1 (5:31) Jesus Christ, Deity—Witness—Judicial System: a man's own testimony is unacceptable and suspicious. The witness of a man has to be supported by other witnesses, and at least two witnesses are required. This is one of the most fundamental laws of society throughout the world. (See De. 17:6; 19:15; Mt. 18:16; 2 Co. 13:1; 1 Ti. 5:19.) This is the point that Jesus was making. Note how He was stooping down to the level of man. What He had said was true. He was the Son of God; He could not lie. He was precisely who He claimed to be and the fact should have been known. Men should have been searching and seeking after God so diligently that they could not miss the fact that He was the Son of God. He was so different and so Godly. However to meet their need, He would prove the fact by meeting the demands of justice. He would call forth five witnesses to prove His claim.

Thought 1. The fact that a man's word is untrustworthy reflects the poor stuff of which men are made. Man's word, his honesty and integrity, cannot be trusted—not even in a court of law. Note his nature of self-centeredness: he loves himself much more than truth, even when the life of society and its laws are threatened.

Thought 2. Note the love of Christ for man—His seeking after man, using every method He can to convince men so that they might be saved.

2 (5:32) Holy Spirit—Jesus Christ, Witnesses to: there is the witness within, the Holy Spirit. Christ did not identify who He meant by *another* (allos). (See Jn. 14:16.) Most commentators believe He was referring to God Himself. There are three reasons why the Holy Spirit is thought to be the One to whom Christ was referring.

a. The Holy Spirit had already been given to Christ “without measure” (see note—Jn. 3:34). He was, of course, very conscious of the witness of the Spirit both within and without Him. The Spirit was empowering Him and doing the works of God through Him.

b. The Holy Spirit is One of the witnesses that bears witness of Christ (see 1 Jn. 5:6–12). When John the apostle discusses the witness to Christ in his epistle, he mentions the Spirit. If the present verse is not referring to the Spirit, then the Spirit is not listed as one of the witnesses in the present passage. This would be most unlikely, especially since the witness of the Father is covered in vv.37–38, and the ministry and witness of the Spirit is covered so thoroughly in this Gospel. (See outline and notes—Jn. 14:15–26; 16:7–15.)

c. Note how the verse reads. Christ seems to be talking more about an inner witness, the witness of a Presence which He senses within His innermost Being, a Power that works in and through Him. This of course could be God, but again it could also be the Spirit which would fit more naturally in the context.

Note the Lord's words, “I know that the witness He witnesseth of me is *true*.” The Lord meant at least two things.

1. He knew the truth of the witness within His own heart and life. He had the consciousness, the sense, the awareness, the personal knowledge of the Spirit's witness within His own inner Being. The Spirit bore witness with Jesus' own Spirit that He was the Son of God.

2. He knew that the witness and the work of the Holy Spirit, in and through Him, was true. The Spirit was convicting men, working in their hearts and lives, convincing them of the claims of Christ. (See outline and notes—Jn. 16:7–15 for the Lord's discussion of the Spirit's work.)

“For he whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God: for God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him” (Jn. 3:34).

“It is the spirit [Holy Spirit] that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life” (Jn. 6:63).

“How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him” (Ac. 10:38).

3 (5:33–35) John the Baptist: there was the witness of John the Baptist. The religionists had sent some men to ask John about his witness, and John bore witness to *the truth*. Note several points.

a. The words *bore witness* (memartureken) mean a permanent and continuing witness. His message was not a fly-by-night witness that appeared on the scene and suddenly disappeared. His witness continued and still continues and will always continue. It was a trustworthy message, a witness to the truth. (See Jn. 1:19–27, 29–36.)

“In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judaea, and saying, Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.... Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance” (Mt. 3:1–2, 8).

“And now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees: therefore every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire” (Mt. 3:10–11).

b. The words *the truth* are a reference not only to the truth of John’s message but also to Christ Himself, who is *the Truth*, the very embodiment of Truth. (See Deeper Study # 2—Jn. 14:6.)

“Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me” (Jn. 14:6).

c. Jesus did not need or plead the witness of a mere man. The implication for man is clear: men should not plead the witness of a mere man when dealing with eternal issues that determine their destiny. The testimony of God’s Son should be counted the strongest of witnesses, yet tragically men want the testimony of other men just like themselves.

Note: Jesus did not receive the witness of men, for He knew what was in man (see Jn. 2:24–25). He also rebuked Nicodemus for not receiving His witness and letting it be enough (Jn. 3:11).

d. Jesus reached out to men, giving them what they required, hoping to save some. He gave them the most dynamic human witness He could—John the Baptist. John’s witness was as clear and pointed as it could be: “Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world” (Jn. 1:29).

e. The witness of John was that of a burning and shining light. His light was clearly seen to be of God, lit by God as the light of God. That John’s message (witness) was of God could not be questioned by any reasonable and honest person. John definitely showed men the way to God, just as a light shows men the way out of darkness.

f. The people rejoiced in John’s light, but *only for a season*. They looked upon John as a sensation, a moment of excitement, listening and accepting only what they wished. Very simply, if John said anything that did not allow them to do as they desired, they rejected it.

4 (5:36) Jesus Christ, Deity—Works—Witness to: there was the witness of miraculous works. Four significant things were said by Jesus. (See notes—Jn. 5:19; 5:20b; Deeper Study # 2—10:25 for more discussion.)

a. Jesus’ works were a greater witness than the witness of John the Baptist.

b. Jesus’ works were given to Him by the Father. He was on a mission for God; therefore, what He did—all the works—were of God (see Jn. 3:35).

⇒ He was the One appointed by God to carry out the works of God.

⇒ He was the One empowered by God to do the works of God.

c. Jesus' works were the Father's works. The Father was the Originator, the Planner, the Overseer of the works. He was the One who had given the works to be done and completed. Note that Jesus claimed to have completed the works perfectly (see Jn. 17:4; 19:30).

d. Jesus' works proved that the Father had sent Him. They were works which had never been, or ever would be, done by others (Jn. 15:24). They were so unusual—so full of power and wisdom, love and care, glory and honor to God—that all men who failed to see and believe were without excuse. Remember, He had just performed one of the Godly works, healing the paralyzed man.

"I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work" (Jn. 9:4).

"Jesus answered them, I told you, and ye believed not: the works that I do in my Father's name, they bear witness of me" (Jn. 10:25).

"If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not. But if I do, though ye believe not me, believe the works: that ye may know, and believe, that the Father is in me, and I in him" (Jn. 10:37–38).

"Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me: or else believe me for the very works' sake" (Jn. 14:11).

"If I had not done among them the works which none other man did, they had not had sin: but now have they both seen and hated both me and my Father" (Jn. 15:24).

"And when he was come into his own country, he taught them in their synagogue, insomuch that they were astonished, and said, Whence hath this man this wisdom, and these mighty works?" (Mt. 13:54; see Mk. 6:2, 14).

5 (5:37–38) Jesus Christ, Deity—Witnesses to—Word of God: there was the witness of God Himself. God sent Christ into the world, so Christ naturally bore witness of God. The witness included all that God had ever revealed to man down through the centuries. Everything God did was to prepare the way for His Son, and every single act bore witness that God was sending His Son. (See Deeper Study # 1—Jn. 4:22.)

"But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father" (Ga. 4:4–6).

The point is striking: the way was being prepared for the coming of God's Son ...

- every time God spoke
- every time God appeared (theophany, in whatever form or manner)
- every time God acted

Christ made two charges against the religionists. (The same charges can be made against the world.)

a. “Ye have neither heard His [God’s] voice *at any time*, nor seen His shape, what He is like.” Some people may think they have seen God, but they have not. However, it is not because God has not spoken or shown what He is like. He has revealed the truth about Himself and the coming of His Son.

⇒ Some in the *Old Testament* did hear and see what God was like (Ge. 32:30; Ex. 24:10; 33:11; Nu. 12:8; De. 4:12; 5:4, 24).

⇒ Some in the *New Testament* did hear and see what God was like: Simeon (Lu. 1:25f), Anna (Lu. 1:36f), and others (Jn. 1:40f; 12:28–30).

However, most down through the centuries have not heard and seen God, and most still do not.

“No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him” (Jn. 1:18).

“[Jesus Christ] who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature” (Col. 1:15).

“Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honour and glory for ever and ever” (1 Ti. 1:17).

“[God] who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see: to whom be honour and power everlasting” (1 Ti. 6:16).

“No man hath seen God at any time” (1 Jn. 4:12).

“And he said, thou canst not see my face: for there shall no man see me, and live” (Ex. 33:20).

“Lo, he goeth by me, and I see him not: he passeth on also, but I perceive him not” (Jb. 9:11).

“Behold, I go forward, but he is not there; and backward, but I cannot perceive him” (Jb. 23:8).

b. “Ye have not His word abiding in you.” They had the Old Testament Scriptures, but they did not have the Word of God *abiding* in their hearts and lives (see Deeper Study # 1—Jn. 5:38 for discussion).

Deeper Study # 1

(5:38) **Word of God—Abiding:** the Word of God must abide in a person for a person to know God in a personal way. Two things are necessary for the Word of God to abide in a person.

1. The Word of God must be accepted as *God’s Word*. The Word must be accepted as coming from God; it must be accepted as truth, as fact, as gospel. Where the religionists failed is seen in the next point. (Also see note—Jn. 5:39.)

2. The Word of God *must be abiding* in a person. This means two things.

a. The Word of God must be “*in you*” not just *among you* (v.38). The religionist had the Word of God all around him: on his desk and table, in his home and church, on his tongue, and sounding upon his ears. However, he did not have the Word *in his heart*, and *unless something is within, it is not abiding* in a person.

b. The Word of God must be “abiding.” It must not only be allowed to come into a person’s mind and heart, it must be grasped and clung to. It must stay within and remain and not be allowed to depart. *Abiding* means the Word of God is ...

- living, moving, ruling, and reigning in a person’s life and heart
- stirring, convicting, and challenging a person
- leading to confession, repentance, growth, and maturity
- teaching love, compassion, forgiveness, goodness, and just behavior
- causing one to believe and trust God’s Son, Jesus Christ, as his Savior and Lord

Thought 1. When God’s word *truly abides* in a person, that person naturally *accepts what God says and lives as God says*, and that person believes God’s Son. It would be impossible to accept what God says and not accept what He says about His Son. To reject what God says about His Son is to reject God’s Word. If a person does not believe God’s Son, to whom God witnesses, then God’s Word does not abide in that person.

“He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day” (Jn. 12:48).

“For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart” (He. 4:12).

6 (5:39) Scripture—Jesus Christ, Deity—Eternal Life: there is the witness of Scripture. Note three things.

a. The word *search* (eraunate, “ye search”) can be either a fact, that “ye search the scriptures,” or a command, “search the scriptures.” It seems that the words “for in them ye think” point toward the meaning being a statement of fact. The religionists do “search the scriptures,” for they think they have eternal life “in their searching.”

b. The Scriptures *proclaim* the message of eternal life and show us how to secure eternal life, but the Scriptures do not impart or give eternal life. Only Christ can give eternal life. A person does not secure eternal life ...

- by reading the Scripture, no matter how much he reads
- by knowing the Scripture, no matter how much he knows
- by being religious, no matter how religious he is
- by doing religious works, no matter how much good he does

A person receives eternal life only by believing and giving his heart and life to Jesus Christ. (See Deeper Study # 2—Jn. 2:24.)

“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life” (Jn. 3:16).

“And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life” (1 Jn. 5:11–12).

c. The Scriptures testify of Christ.

“And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself.... Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures” (Lu. 24:27, 45).

“Of which salvation the prophets have enquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you: searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow” (1 Pe. 1:10–11).

D. The Rejection of Jesus' Claim, 5:40–47

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1. People refuse to come to Christ | 40 And ye will not come to me, that ye might have life.

41 I receive not honour from men. |
| 2. People do not love God | 42 But I know you, that ye have not the love of God in you. |
| 3. People accept false messiahs | 43 I am come in my Father's name, and ye receive me not: if another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive. |
| 4. People seek the approval & honor of mere men | 44 How can ye believe, which receive honour one of another, and seek not the honour that <i>cometh</i> from God only? |
| 5. People do not believe prophecy—do not believe Moses' writings | 45 Do not think that I will accuse you to the Father: there is <i>one</i> that accuseth you, <i>even</i> Moses, in whom ye trust.

46 For had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me: for he wrote of me. |

6. People do not believe the words of the true Messiah 47 But if ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe my words?

D. The Rejection of Jesus' Claim, 5:40–47

(5:40–47) **Introduction:** men reject Jesus' claim to be "equal with God" (Jn. 5:18). Jesus gave six reasons for their rejection.

1. People refuse to come to Christ (vv.40–41).
2. People do not love God (v.42).
3. People accept false messiahs (v.43).
4. People seek the approval and honor of mere men (v.44).
5. People do not believe prophecy—do not believe Moses' writings (vv.45–46).
6. People do not believe the words of the true Messiah (v.47).

1 (5:40–41) Will: men do not "will" to come to Christ. The *will* is stressed. Men deliberately choose to reject Jesus Christ. They actually exercise the will not to come to Him for salvation. There is an obstinacy and a hardness within man, a rebellion against God (see Jn. 1:11; Mt. 23:37).

"Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye" (Ac. 7:51).

"Yet he sent prophets to them, to bring them again unto the Lord; and they testified against them: but they would not give ear" (2 Chr. 24:19).

"And they have turned unto me the back, and not the face: though I taught them, rising up early and teaching them, yet they have not hearkened to receive instruction" (Je. 32:33).

"As for the word that thou hast spoken unto us in the name of the Lord, we will not hearken unto thee" (Je. 44:16).

a. Jesus claimed that life was in Him (see Deeper Study # 2—Jn. 1:4; Deeper Study # 1—10:10; Deeper Study # 1—17:2–3).

"In him was life; and the life was the light of men" (Jn. 1:4).

"For as the Father hath life in himself; so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself" (Jn. 5:26).

"I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly" (Jn. 10:10).

"Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live" (Jn. 11:25).

"Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me" (Jn. 14:6).

b. Men receive life by coming to Jesus Christ. They keep from dying by coming to Jesus Christ (see notes—Jn. 5:21; 5:24–25; Deeper Study # 1—He. 9:27).

“For as the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth them; even so the Son quickeneth whom he will” (Jn. 5:21).

“Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life” (Jn. 5:24–25).

c. Jesus was not claiming to be the Son of God in order to receive the praise and glory of men (v.41). He was proclaiming the truth because He loved them, and the fact of His deity is the truth. Men must face up to the truth if they wish to be saved. Man’s rejection cuts the heart of Christ, and the hurt is seen in the tenderness and appeal of this verse. There is a pleading in His words: “Ye will not come to me, that ye might have life.”

“For the heart of this people is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes have they closed; lest they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them” (Ac. 28:27).

“How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him” (He. 2:3).

“See that ye refuse not him that speaketh. For if they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth, much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from him that speaketh from heaven” (He. 12:25).

2 (5:42) Rejection—Profession, False: men will to reject Christ, to reject the claim of Christ because they do not love God. The love of God is not in their hearts.

a. The people to whom Jesus was speaking professed to love God deeply. They ...

- worshipped faithfully
- knew the Scriptures
- were always praying
- were unashamed to talk about Him

However, the love of God was not *in* them, not really. It was not shed abroad in their hearts, not the kind of love that honors and praises God, giving all that one is and has to love and help people.

“And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us” (Ro. 5:5).

“Beloved, let us love one other: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. He that loveth not knoweth not God for God is love” (1 Jn. 4:7–8)

“This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me” (Mt. 15:8).

Thought 1. If men loved God, they would receive Christ.

“In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.... And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him.... We love him, because he first loved us” (1 Jn. 4:9–10, 16, 19).

b. Jesus said, “I know you.” He knows a man’s heart, if a man’s profession is true and genuine or false and counterfeit. Jesus sees right through a man’s words, down deep into his heart.

“For nothing is secret, that shall not be made manifest; neither any thing hid, that shall not be known and come abroad” (Lu. 8:17).

“For his eyes are upon the ways of man, and he seeth all his goings” (Job 34:21).

“For the ways of man are before the eyes of the Lord, and he pondereth all his goings” (Pr. 5:21).

“For though thou wash thee with nitre, and take thee much soap, yet thine iniquity is marked before me, saith the Lord GOD” (Je. 2:22).

“For mine eyes are upon all their ways: they are not hid from my face, neither is their iniquity hid from mine eyes” (Je. 16:17).

“Great in counsel, and mighty in work: for thine eyes are open upon all the ways of the sons of men: to give every one according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings” (Je. 32:19).

“And the spirit of the Lord fell upon me, and said unto me, Speak; Thus saith the Lord; Thus have ye said, O house of Israel: for I know the things that come into your mind, every one of them” (Eze. 11:5).

“For I know your manifold transgressions and your mighty sins: they afflict the just, they take a bribe, and they turn aside the poor in the gate from their right” (Amos 5:12).

3 (5:43) Messiah—Messiahship: men receive false messiahs. There is a contrast here.

a. Jesus said, “I have come in my Father’s name,” but “another shall come in his own name.” Jesus came in the name, that is, in the authority and truthfulness, of God. “Another,” the false messiah, comes in the authority and word of himself.

b. Jesus said, “Ye receive me not,” but “him ye will receive.” Men reject God’s Son, the true Messiah, but they receive the false messiah. Why?

Men want either to escape from the world or to get all they can from the world.

⇒ Some want to escape the pressure, tension, immorality, selfishness, hatred, and injustices of the world.

⇒ Others want either a reasonable amount of prosperity, pleasure, power, recognition, or fame of the world.

Jesus, being the Son of God, cannot lie to man. He has to tell the truth. The way to life is not by escaping the world nor by getting plenty of the world. The way to life is to do exactly as Jesus said:

“If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: but whosoever will lose his life for my sake, the same shall save it. For what is a man advantaged, if he gain the whole world, and lose himself, or be cast away?” (Lu. 9:23–25).

The false messiah or human deliverer is not truthful. He is a mere man, full of all the weaknesses and infirmities of men. A false messiah is a person born of mere man and woman; he is a person who will die as a mere man just as all other men die. The false messiah is a deceiving person with leadership qualities and charisma who has learned to promise what men crave: escapism and possessions. Therefore, he sets himself up claiming that belief in his “name,” that is, in what he says, will meet man’s needs. Jesus says that most men “will receive” such a false messiah or deliverer. (See Mt. 24:23–26. See Deeper Study # 2—Mt. 1:18.)

“Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven” (Mt. 5:19).

“For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works” (2 Co. 11:13–15).

“Desiring to be teachers of the law; understanding neither what they say, nor whereof they affirm” (1 Ti. 1:7).

“For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; and they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables” (2 Ti. 4:3–4).

“But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction” (2 Pe. 2:1).

“Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son. Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father” (1 Jn. 2:22–23).

4 (5:44) Seeking Approval—Pride—Self-Suffering: men seek the approval and honor of *mere* men. Men make two gross mistakes.

a. They seek the acceptance and approval, the recognition and honor, of other men, and such becomes the driving force of their lives. People seek ...

- the right position in which to be seen
- the right place to live and work
- the right car to drive
- the right clothes to wear
- the right looks to attract

- the right gifts to secure honor
- the power and wealth to possess
- the recognition and fame to be known

They do not seek the acceptance and approval nor the recognition and honor of God.

b. They measure themselves against other men, not against God. When a man measures himself by other men, he is seen to be good and acceptable. He does not come short often, if at all. But note something: when a person is being praised and honored by others, he feels acceptable, complete, fulfilled. Therefore, he often senses no need for God. Only when men measure themselves against God do they see themselves for what they are: “short of God’s glory” (Ro. 3:23). Only then do they bow in humility and beg forgiveness and cast themselves upon the mercy of God. Note the question of Christ: “[In light of this,] how can ye believe?”

“For if a man think himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself” (Ga. 6:3).

“If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man’s religion is vain” (Js. 1:26).

“If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us” (1 Jn. 1:8).

“Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked” (Re. 3:17).

“Most men will proclaim every one his own goodness: but a faithful man who can find?” (Pr. 20:6).

“For men to search their own glory is not glory” (Pr. 25:27).

“Woe unto them that are wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight!” (Is. 5:21).

“Ye have plowed wickedness, ye have reaped iniquity; ye have eaten the fruit of lies: because thou didst trust in thy way, in the multitude of thy mighty men” (Ho. 10:13).

“The pride of thine heart hath deceived thee, thou that dwellest in the clefts of the rock, whose habitation is high; that saith in his heart, Who shall bring me down to the ground? Though thou exalt thyself as the eagle, and though thou set thy nest among the stars, thence will I bring thee down, saith the Lord” (Obad. 3–4).

5 (5:45–46) Man, Unbelief—Prophecy: men do not believe prophecy, do not believe Moses’ writings. Note two things.

a. Jesus said, “Moses wrote of me.” All the prophecies in Genesis through Deuteronomy are the prophecies to which Jesus was referring (see Deeper Study # 3—Jn. 1:45 for the prophecies by Moses).

b. Jesus said that Moses was the one who condemned man’s unbelief, not Him. The men standing before Jesus professed to believe Moses, but they did not—not really.

⇒ They did not believe what Moses said about the promised Messiah.

⇒ They did not live as Moses said to live.

⇒ Their profession would be condemned by the very one whom they said they trusted, by Moses himself.

“And he said unto them, Full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition” (Mk. 7:9).

“Making the word of God of none effect through your tradition, which ye have delivered: and many such like things do ye” (Mk. 7:13).

“Then he said unto them, O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken” (Lu. 24:25).

“He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him” (Jn. 3:36).

“I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins” (Jn. 8:24).

“Seeing thou hatest instruction, and castest my words behind thee” (Ps. 50:17).

“Therefore as the fire devoureth the stubble, and the flame consumeth the chaff, so their root shall be as rottenness, and their blossom shall go up as dust: because they have cast away the law of the Lord of hosts, and despised the word of the Holy One of Israel” (Is. 5:24).

“That this is a rebellious people, lying children, children that will not hear the law of the Lord” (Is. 30:9).

“Wherefore thus saith the Holy One of Israel, Because ye despise this word, and trust in oppression and perverseness, and stay thereon: therefore this iniquity shall be to you as a breach ready to fall, swelling out in a high wall, whose breaking cometh suddenly at an instant” (Is. 30:12–13).

“To whom shall I speak, and give warning, that they may hear? behold, their ear is uncircumcised, and they cannot hearken: behold, the word of the Lord is unto them a reproach; they have no delight in it” (Je. 6:10).

“Hear, O earth: behold, I will bring evil upon this people, even the fruit of their thoughts, because they have not hearkened unto my words, nor to my law, but rejected it” (Je. 6:19).

“The wise men are ashamed, they are dismayed and taken: lo, they have rejected the word of the Lord; and what wisdom is in them?” (Je. 8:9; cp. Je. 9:13–16; Ho. 4:6; Amos 2:4).

“Yea, they made their hearts as an adamant stone, lest they should hear the law, and the words which the Lord of hosts hath sent in his spirit by the former prophets: therefore came a great wrath from the Lord of hosts” (Zec. 7:12).

6 (5:47) Unbelief—Jesus Christ, Words—Word of God: men do not believe the words of the true Messiah. Jesus gave two reasons why men do not believe Him.

a. They did not believe Moses’ writings, the words of Scripture. How then could men believe the promises of the Messiah?

b. They did not believe the testimony of a man whom they professed was a great and honorable man. They honored Moses, calling him great and honorable; yet they treated him as a liar, a man whose testimony was unreliable. How then could men believe the words of Christ?

Thought 1. How many acknowledge Christ as a great and honorable man yet treat Him as a liar, a man whose testimony and claims are totally untrustworthy?

“He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day” (Jn. 12:48).

“He that loveth me not keepeth not my sayings: and the word which ye hear is not mine, but the Father’s which sent me” (Jn. 14:24).

“If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness; he is proud, knowing nothing, but doting about questions and strifes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings” (1 Ti. 6:3–4).

“Verily, verily, I say unto you, If a man keep my saying, he shall never see death” (Jn. 8:51).

“If ye love me, keep my commandments” (Jn. 14:15).

“And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments” (1 Jn. 2:3).¹

¹ Leadership Ministries Worldwide. (2004). [*The Gospel according to John*](#) (pp. 103–123). Leadership Ministries Worldwide.

