

EXPOSITION OF JOHN

Message #26

John 5:31-47

Over in Cheyenne, Wyoming, in the Frontier West Museum, is the rifle of Tom Horn. Tom Horn was raised in a Christian home and in his early teen years came west and became one of the great scouts, guides and lawman of the late 1800s. However, what made Tom Horn famous is that he was the last man to be hanged in Cheyenne for a crime he never committed. It was alleged that he had killed a teenage shepherd boy and even though there was absolutely no proof and no eyewitnesses, certain powerful people invented a lie and Tom Horn was hanged. While Tom was in jail, he asked for paper and pen and he chronicled his life. At the end of his autobiography are letters from people who knew him. They said he would never shoot an innocent man. He never cursed and he had an impeccable character. Tom Horn's execution is one of the worst unjust tragedies of the West.

There is a tragedy far worse than the story of Tom Horn, it is the life story of Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ came to this world as God and He had many eyewitnesses to the truth that He was God and that He was the only way to being saved. There was no lack of evidence in the case of Jesus Christ, there was an abundance of evidence that He was God, in fact, it was overwhelming. **But the vast majority of people then rejected the evidence and they still do now.** Jesus was nailed to a cross by people who had seen and heard and knew the truth. They rejected the facts about Him and most people today do the same.

There is a profound lesson to be learned from this passage:

JESUS CHRIST OFFERED MANY PROOFS THAT HE WAS GOD AND THAT HE WAS THE ONLY WAY TO BEING SAVED AND THE VAST MAJORITY OF PEOPLE REJECTED THESE PROOFS AND REFUSED TO BELIEVE ON HIM.

This is one of the great texts of the Bible that proves the deity of Jesus Christ and proves that He is the only way to be saved. Jesus Christ is offering legal evidence that He is God and that He is the only Savior. Based on this evidence, everyone here must make some kind of decision. As we approach this great passage, our minds wonder who Jesus Christ will call as His witnesses. What evidences will He offer. In this text there are five witnesses, five evidences He offers that are reliable and powerful:

EVIDENCE #1 – The evidence of Christ's own personal testimony. 5:31-32

Jesus Christ did not shy away from the fact that He was God and He did not shy away from the fact that He was equal with God the Father (5:18). Had Jesus Christ been the only Person to testify of this, His testimony would have been reliable, but not necessarily provable.

In order to have legal validity, a testimony must have supporting witnesses (Deut. 17:6; 18:15; II Cor. 13:1; II Peter 1:20). If it does not have supporting witnesses, it is not legally valid.

When Christ says in **verse 31** that if I alone bear witness that I am God, my testimony is not true what He means is that it is not legally provable.

But as you will see, Christ says, I offer you an abundance of evidence, which you reject. In **verse 32**, the pronoun “another” (αλλος) means there is another of the same kind of witness as Christ, which is none other than God the Father. The pronoun “another” means Jesus Christ is at the same level as God the father. So Christ is saying, as you shall see, not only do I testify that I am God and the only means of salvation, but also God the Father testifies of the same reality.

If a person denies that Jesus Christ is God, he is rejecting the testimony of God the Father and God the Son. When it comes to believing things about Jesus Christ the issue is not my view versus yours or this church’s view versus another church, it is our view versus Jesus Christ and our view versus God the Father.

EVIDENCE #2 – The evidence of John's testimony. 5:33-35

Of all of the evidences Christ offers in this context, this would be the least significant of the five, although it is important and powerful. Jesus now appeals to someone all of these Jews knew something about - John the Baptist. John had made a real dent in the Jewish world.

Christ says, not only do you have my testimony that I am God and that I am the only Savior, but you also have the testimony of John. John bore witness to the truth concerning Jesus Christ. John was a lamp who presented the truth about Jesus Christ (John 1:26-27, 29-34, 36; 3:25-30). John was a lamp who let his light shine before others (Matthew 5:16), and John was a man who explicitly said, “I am not the Christ” (John 3:28).

John the Baptist was the greatest prophet to ever live. Among men born of women, there was not another greater than John. However, this one testified of the Person of Jesus Christ. He identified Him as the Messiah, as God and as the Savior. John’s job (John 5:33) was to testify of the truth concerning Jesus Christ, not to entertain people. John was not looking for popularity, to win arguments, or to impress scholars. **He was looking to herald God’s truth so people could be saved.** This is our job. Our job is to herald God’s truth so people may be saved. We are not out for popularity, to debate and win arguments or to entertain. Our job is to point people to faith in Jesus Christ.

The main reason why Christ appeals to John, is not because He needed this proof, but so that people might be saved through the witness of John who clearly pointed people to Jesus Christ.

I had a chance to witness to a woman in her store in Dubois, Wyoming. We had a lengthy discussion about what one must do to be saved. She said - I am not going to allow any man to totally control my life. I said to her - that is your choice, but you need to know that Jesus Christ is not any man - He is God and someday you will stand before Him and He will judge you.

EVIDENCE #3 – The evidence of Christ's miracles. 5:36

Every miracle that Christ performed, and He performed many miracles, He did in perfect conformity to the will of God the Father to establish His identity - Jesus is God and Jesus is the only Savior. Now the fact that Jesus did miracles is a fact of history which cannot be denied. Flavius Josephus, a Jewish historian who lived in the time of Christ writes: “Now, there was about this time, Jesus, a wise man, if it be lawful to call him a man, **for he was a doer of wonderful works...**” (*The Complete Works of Josephus*, p. 379).

Jesus Christ did not promote some healing service. He did not take an offering after or before He did the miracle. He didn't have people come to a service and stand in a line. **He did miracle after miracle as a demonstration that He was God**. He healed people - he made blind people see, deaf people hear, lame people walk, fevered people cooled and lepers cleansed. He identified people - people he had never met; He told them everything they had ever done. He provided for people - turned water into wine, fed thousands of people, found money in a fish to pay taxes. He walked on water, and He raised the dead, as one commentator said, Jesus broke up every funeral He ever attended and He raised Himself after He was dead. Just to name a few of the things He did. **Every one of these miracles He did in conformity with God the Father as proof of the fact that He was God and that He is the Only Savior.** This is evidence of His Deity.

Jesus did miracles to prove He was out of the Godhead. Those wonderful miracles proved He was out of the Father. Jesus' miracles were His credentials. They bore witness to the fact that He is God, that He was sent by the Father to this earth and that He is the only means of salvation. I am so sick and tired of these fake faith healers. Let's see them walk on water, or go to a funeral and raise a dead person. Let's see one of them take some dirt, spit on it and put it on a blind man so he may see. Let's see them go to the Special Olympics and touch everyone there so they may compete in the other Olympics. They are all phony, but Jesus Christ was the real God/man.

For evidence that Jesus is God you have the witness of Jesus Christ, you have the testimony of John and you have the miracles of Christ.

EVIDENCE #4 – There is the evidence of the Father's testimony. 5:37-38

Until Jesus came, there was no voice from heaven that identified one as His Son, nor a voice that consistently spoke verbally to people and there was no physical form of God on earth. When Jesus came, He changed all of that. The word “form” (εἶδος) is one that speaks of external form, or tangible appearance. Christ came and brought both the voice of God and the form of God to this world and the world refused to hear His voice or see His form.

God the Father, who sent God the Son, testified of the fact that this was God the Son. In fact, God made this statement publicly and audibly at Christ's baptism (Matthew 3:17) at Christ's transfiguration (Mark 9:2-7), and before His crucifixion (John 12:28). God the Father was fully displayed and revealed by God the Son (John 1:18). So the Father gave verbal testimony and visible testimony that Jesus is God and He is the Savior.

Yet the religious leaders, who should have heralded this, would not hear Him nor could they see this because, as **verse 38** explains, they do not have a real relationship with Him because they refused to believe only in Jesus Christ. They do not really receive His Word and they do not believe in Jesus Christ. These hard-hearted, rigid, critical legalists never heard the voice of God. And it is possible you never will either. You harden your heart to the truth and you will miss hearing from God and seeing the true work of God even when it is right before you.

These were religious people who saw Christ do the miraculous, but they had no relationship with God. Listen, a person may be very, very religious. A person may have seen God do remarkable things and even claim to have seen a miracle, but that does not mean the person has a real relationship with God. That does not mean that the person has received Christ as Savior. Such was the case with the religious leaders of Christ's day.

EVIDENCE #5 – The evidence of the Scriptures . 5:39-47

Very few are willing to fight for the authority of the Bible and fewer still are willing to live by the Bible and make it their authority. The Scriptures - both the O.T. and N.T. contain the truth that Jesus Christ is the only way to be saved from your sins. If you are searching the Scriptures and you do not see this - you are as blind as a bat, as dumb as a doorpost and as hard-hearted as a Pharisee.

The word “search” (5:39) is one that refers to careful, laborious examination. These Jewish leaders searched the Scriptures intensely. They always had their noses in the Bible, but they never got beyond the parchment and the ink. Verse 39 is a statement of fact, not a command - these boys were always in the Bible and they were “unwilling” (v. 40) to come to Christ for salvation. One may search the Scriptures and still be unwilling to yield to truth. **Just because one faithfully reads the Bible does not mean one faithfully responds to God.**

Just south of Yellowstone National Park, there is a chapel and if you go into it, you look through the glass window and you are looking at the majesty and the grandeur of the Teton Mountain Range. Now suppose someone goes into the chapel and says, my, what wonderful glass this window has. I wonder what type of glass this is. Isn't it something. We would say, you're missing the real picture here. This chapel window is not about seeing glass, it is about seeing the Tetons. That was the way it was for these Pharisees, they looked at the Scriptures with great intensity, but couldn't see the truth about Jesus Christ.

The O.T. contained many blood sacrifices of animals that were designed to cover sin, but those blood sacrifices could never take away sin. The O.T. contained many legitimate types that spoke of Christ, such as the episode with Abraham and Isaac. The Scriptures testify and point to the coming of Jesus Christ. Christ came to be wounded for our transgressions, to be bruised for our iniquities. He who knew no sin, became sin for us. All of the Scriptures testify of this. But hard-hearted religious fraudulent Pharisees do not accept this truth. As **verse 42** says, they do not have the love of God in them. They do not receive Jesus Christ (**v. 43**), they would receive and embrace another man just like themselves. In fact, they will eventually embrace the Antichrist. They are not looking to glorify God, they are seeking the glory of other men (**v. 44**). **Jesus is not a man, He is the one and only God.**

I believe there are many in ministry who are after this right now. They want other men to be impressed with them. They want the glory of men. They are not interested in actually believing and presenting truth, they are interested in self-promotion, self-glorification and self-gain. These men present other things that other men like. These imposters talk about material wealth, worldly status and pleasure. Jesus offers a cross.

Now Christ makes a profound point to them in **verses 45-46** - I will not accuse you before the Father but Moses will. How will Moses accuse them? Moses wrote the law and the law shows you and I are guilty and if you actually believed what Moses wrote, you would believe in Me **because you would admit that you cannot possibly measure up to the standard of God found in the O.T. law. The law of Moses will be a witness against us (Deut. 31:26).** It is not our friend.

But, Jesus says in **verse 47**, if you don't believe Moses' writings, you won't believe Me. Why? Because I am the God who made Moses and revealed to Moses My Word which shows you are sinful and if you reject his word, you will reject mine, because you will not see yourself as a depraved and dead sinner in need of a Savior.

Five witnesses testify of the fact that Jesus is God and that He is the only One who can save you from your sins:

- 1) The witness of Christ Himself;
- 2) The witness of John the Baptist;
- 3) The witness of the miracles;
- 4) The witness of God the Father;
- 5) The witness of the Scriptures.

What will you do with this evidence?

You have only two choices: 1) Receive Christ; 2) Reject Christ.