

John 4:43-5:47 Chapter Study

I. THE SIGNS Chs. 1-11

Last week –

G. Jesus: Savior of the World 4:1-42

Story of Jesus traveling from Judea in the South back to the Galilee in the North.

Instead of taking the usual detour *around* Samaria, a region carefully avoided by good Jews because it was inhabited by the despised Samaritans, Jesus led the disciples right through the heart of it.

There was a village there that was ripe for the message He brought.

Jesus wanted the disciples to learn that the Gospel wasn't just for the Jews; it was for all people.

This trip through Samaria, & the warm reception He was given there, helped to break down their prejudices.

He spent 2 full days there, then resumed His journey north.

H. The Second Sign: A Son Healed 4:43-54

43 Now after the two days He departed from there and went to Galilee.

44 For Jesus Himself testified that a prophet has no honor in his own country.

All 3 of the other gospels quote Jesus saying that a prophet gets no honor among his own people. ^[1]

This was an ancient proverb with much the same meaning as our saying, "familiarity breeds contempt."

The difference between John & the other gospels is that while they place this quote in the context of Jesus being *rejected* at Nazareth where He'd grown up, John sandwiches it between his being well-received by the Samaritans & His rapidly growing fame in Galilee. It seems an unlikely place to mention a *lack of honor*.

But it highlights John's emphasis on Jesus' ministry, not in Galilee as the other 3 gospels do, but the time He spent in Jerusalem.

You see, unlike the other gospels, John concentrates most of his story on Jesus' ministry in Jerusalem.

Nazareth may have been where Jesus grew up, but for John, His *real* city was the *Holy* City = *Jerusalem*.

It was there, at the temple, the building that was supposed to be the place of His glory that He was *most dishonored* by the rulers.

So John shows Him being honored in Samaria & Galilee, but dishonored by the very ones & in the very place that ought to have been most prepared to glorify & receive Him.

45 So when He came to Galilee, the Galileans received Him, having seen all the things He did in Jerusalem at the feast; for they also had gone to the feast.

This is referring to the events of chs 2 & 3 when Jesus had gone to Jerusalem for the Passover.

Though John doesn't record any specifics, Jesus had performed many miracles there. [2:23]

Large numbers of Galileans had been there & witnessed them.

When Jesus got back to Galilee, they turned out in large numbers to hear & be touched by Him.

46 So Jesus came again to Cana of Galilee where He had made the water wine. And there was a certain nobleman whose son was sick at Capernaum. 47 When he heard that Jesus had come out of Judea into Galilee, he went to Him and implored Him to come down and heal his son, for he was at the point of death.

Jesus returned to the little village of Cana where He'd performed His first miracle.

While there, an official of Herod's court who lived in Capernaum went to see Him.

Capernaum is located on the northern shore of Lake Geneseret.

Cana lies in the hills 25 miles to the west; a full day's journey.

But the man is desperate because his son was near death.

48 Then Jesus said to him, "Unless you people see signs and wonders, you will by no means believe."

In light of the man's need, this seems a rather *harsh* thing for Jesus to say.

If your child is dying, you're frantic to find help.

You're not interested in just seeing a miracle because you're bored & wanting a diversion. Your child is hurting & you're driven by desperation!

So why this hard response from Jesus?

First of all – Jesus is *not* saying this to the father.

He's speaking to the crowd who'd gathered because of the reports of the miracles He'd done in Jerusalem.

They've come to *see a show* & are conditioning their faith on His complying with their desire to witness the spectacular.

Look carefully at Jesus' words in v. 48 – "Unless you people see signs and wonders, you will by no means believe." "You" is plural.

As this nobleman, who they all knew, came with his earnest request for the healing of his dying son, the crowd leaned in to see what would happen.

They didn't believe in Jesus but came with an attitude that said, "I don't think this guy is anything special. **But** – if He performs some wonders & signs that impress me, I may be open to revising my opinion."

John wants to show how the acceptance of Jesus by the common people wasn't set on a solid foundation of faith.

They ought to have accepted & followed Jesus on the basis of His Word *alone*.

But they *conditioned* their acceptance on seeing miracles.

There's nothing wrong with miracles as an *affirmation* of the truth.

In Mark 16:17 Jesus said signs & miracles would follow those who preach the gospel.

Jesus performed signs & wonders as a way to *validate* His message & authority.

The power of God verifies the truth of the Word.

Where this all goes wrong is when people *condition* their faith on *seeing miracles*.

When the attitude is, "Show me, *then & only then* will I believe," faith is

moved from the Word of God *to* miracles.

And that is a dangerous thing because illusion, trickery, & even demonic power can *counterfeit* the work of God.

As Romans 10 makes clear – Real Faith is based on the Word of God.

Miracles & signs reinforce & confirm faith – but God’s Word is faith’s *foundation*.

Question: Is a miracle sufficient reason to believe something?

For instance, let’s say a guy comes along & says we need to realize that we are all divine & that the human race stands poised on a threshold of making an evolutionary quantum leap into the next phase of our development where we will possess new powers & capabilities.

Then, he says he’s already made that step himself, and will prove it by calling down fire from heaven.

Do we believe him = when at his command lightening crackles from his finger tips?

No! The performance of a miracle is not the basis of our faith.

Our faith is built on the Revealed Word of God, what we find in the Holy Scriptures.

Now, here’s the deal – We must believe this apart from & before any signs or wonders.

Instead of, “Show me & I’ll believe,” we should say, “*Because* I believe, I’ll see.”

49 The nobleman said to Him, “Sir, come down before my child dies!”

50 Jesus said to him, “Go your way; your son lives.” So the man believed the word that Jesus spoke to him, and he went his way.

Jesus’ word was enough for this nobleman! And so it should be for us.

51 And as he was now going down, his servants met him and told him, saying, “Your son lives!” 52 Then he inquired of them the hour when he got better. And they said to him, “Yesterday at the seventh hour the fever left him.”

About 1 PM.

53 So the father knew that it was at the same hour in which Jesus said to him, “Your son lives.” And he himself believed, and his whole household.

At first, the nobleman’s faith was in the healing of His son.

Once the report of the healing arrived, His faith moved to the Person & identity of Jesus Himself as the Messiah.

54 This again is the second sign Jesus did when He had come out of Judea into Galilee.

John calls this the 2nd sign. The 1st was turning water into wine.

What’s curious about this is that in 2:23 he says when Jesus was at Jerusalem he did *many* signs.

In Ch. 3 Nicodemus said it was the conclusion of he & his friends that only someone sent from God could do all the things Jesus did.

So why does John single out this miracle & call it a ‘sign?’

Remember – while Jesus performed many miracles, John selected only a few to include in his story. At the end, in 20:30-31 he says why.

30 And truly Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book; ³¹ but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name.

For John, these aren't just miracles; they are **SIGNS** – things meant to point to the fact that Jesus is the Messiah & God; truths that when embraced result in eternal life.

The 1st sign John identifies was Jesus turning water to wine.

This was a miracle of transformation, where the very nature of a thing was changed.

Only God can effect such a change of nature.

The 2nd sign was the healing of the nobleman's son, which was effected at a distance of over 20 miles, a full day's journey.

In the thinking of that time, a prophet or other very godly person might be able to work a miracle at close range, but not at a distance.

This was a demonstration of power the likes of which they'd not seen before.

And it showed that as God, distance is not an issue with Jesus.

Let's keep this in mind as we pray for missionaries & for those around the World.

Distance isn't an issue because time & space make no matter to God.

I. A Lame Man Healed 5:1-15

¹After this there was a feast of the Jews, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem.

John doesn't identify *which* feast this was.

It may have been one of the mandatory feasts where going to Jerusalem was required, or one of the lesser holidays where attendance at Jerusalem wasn't *required* but was preferred.

²Now there is in Jerusalem by the Sheep Gate a pool, which is called in Hebrew, Bethesda, having five porches.

This gate lies in the eastern wall of Jerusalem, facing the Kidron Valley, just north of the Temple Mount.

It's called the 'Sheep Gate' because it's the gate the sacrificial sheep were brought through on their way to the Temple.

Just inside the gate to the north lies a large twin-pool reservoir known as the Pool of Bethesda.

Bethesda means "House of Grace"

Though gone now, the pools were deep & fed by a spring.

They provided water for the entire northern portion of the City of Jerusalem as well as all the temple service.

The northern pool was slightly higher than the southern, and around the edges of each pool was built a colonnade, providing 5 covered decks, or porches as they're called here.

³In these lay a great multitude of sick people, blind, lame, paralyzed,

waiting for the moving of the water. ⁴ For an angel went down at a certain time into the pool and stirred up the water; then whoever stepped in first, after the stirring of the water, was made well of whatever disease he had.

Now, here's where we get into a little trouble . . .

I'm reading from the NKJV. If you've got an NIV or NLT the last part of v. 3 & all of v 4 isn't there. It's footnoted. The NAS has it bracketed.

The footnote says something to the effect of how the longer version isn't found in the oldest & most reliable manuscripts.

Let me explain why.

Most modern translations are based on what is known as the *Alexandrian textual type*.

Meaning, those NT manuscripts that come to us from the region of the ancient City of Alexandria in North Africa.

The King James Bible was based mainly on what's known as the *Majority Text*, or the *Textus Receptus*, which is drawn from the Northern Mediterranean.

While there are a lot MORE manuscripts of the Textus Receptus, they aren't as old as the Alexandrian textual type, which tended to be better preserved because the climate is a lot drier in North Africa.

Also, as Islam spread across North Africa, Christianity went into decline & the texts were lost.

The Textus Receptus was the main text used by Christians as the Church grew into Europe.

As these manuscripts were handled more, in a wetter climate, they wore out & had to be replaced more readily.

They were the basic text used by the King James translators as they prepared the King James Bible in the early 17th century.

Much later, some of the older Alexandrian texts were unearthed in North Africa, in the Middle East, and in a few isolated monasteries.

Many scholars immediately jumped on the band-wagon of saying that these older manuscripts must automatically reflect a more accurate text.

As a consequence, most of the modern translations of the Bible have given preference to the Alexandrian Textual tradition.

But further research has shown that the Church in North Africa was heavily influenced by the Gnostic heresy in the first couple centuries.

Their texts of the NT manuscripts show evidence that the Gnostics edited out anything that violated their doctrinal beliefs – most notably, that the spiritual could take on physical form.

So they alter references to Jesus' body, or to His writing in the sand, or to His eating.

This passage doesn't at all fit in their system because it speaks of an angel which disturbs the water of the pool of Bethesda.

The idea that a pure spiritual being like an angel could interface with physical matter was totally unacceptable to them, so they just took it out.

We see that reflected in some of the modern translations which lean on the

Alexandrian Gnostic-influenced text.

So, the question is – did an angel really come at certain times & disturb the waters, so that the first one in was healed? Well, that’s the way John presents it.

And it seems there was sufficient reason for the people of Jerusalem to accept that as the case because there was a huge crowd there waiting to be healed.

I don’t find it hard at all to believe that at Bethesda, the “House of Grace,” God occasionally sent an angel to bestow healing on the poor & afflicted.

In fact, God may very well have done this just so that a large crowd would gather there & Jesus could one day come to bring healing.

5 Now a certain man was there who had an infirmity thirty-eight years.

6 When Jesus saw him lying there, and knew that he already had been in that condition a long time, He said to him, “Do you want to be made well?”

This seems rather obvious – why else would he be there?

The guy has been lame for nearly 40 years & He’s sitting in the only place where healing is at all likely.

So why does Jesus ask this guy if he wants to be healed? That seems like a no-brainer!

Jesus asks because it’s possible for someone to so identify with their infirmity, with their brokenness & need, that they **STOP** desiring deliverance.

We can become so accustomed to our handicap, or our weakness, or addiction, or failure, *whatever* the manifestation of our fallenness, that we make it our identity.

Healing & deliverance would mean something seeing ourselves *differently*.

We might not particularly like our affliction, but we’ve become *real comfortable* with the identity our affliction has produced.

The idea of having to shed that for something new & unknown is scary for a lot of people.

But certainly that’s not this guy’s problem, right? After all, he’s at the Pool of Bethesda, waiting for the stirring of the water. Doesn’t his presence there mean he wants to be healed?

Not necessarily. He’s been going there for so long maybe it’s a *habit*.

That’s where all his buddies are; all his fellow cripples.

They meet there daily to share their misery.

Every so often when the water stirs, someone else beats them to the edge & walks away healed, but they just shrug their shoulders & go back to playing *Bridge* or *Texas Hold’em* or whatever it was they were doing. It’s just another day at Bethesda!

You came here tonight → Why?

This IS the Pool of Bethesda. This is the house of God’s Grace.

And what we do when we meet here is to not just sit at the edge of the pool but to bathe in the waters of God’s cleansing & healing Word.

So let me ask – did you come here out of habit, to meet & jaw with your pals?

Or did you come to be healed?

All of us have some lameness, some brokenness, some infirmity we need God to heal.

Do you want to be made well? Really?

Do you understand that that is going to mean laying aside your old view of yourself?

If you want to be healed of your anger, do you understand you're not going to be able to blame your temper anymore?

If you want to be delivered from addiction do you realize you're not going to be able to blame your parents any longer?

7 The sick man answered Him, "Sir, I have no man to put me into the pool when the water is stirred up; but while I am coming, another steps down before me."

Jesus asked a simple question – "Do you want to be made well."

The question had no reference to the pool, but the lame man assumed Jesus was asking why he *wasn't* well; what was his excuse for still being there.

He had his excuse all ready – "I'm lame! Someone always beats me."

There's no end to the excuses people give for why they haven't changed.

If the excuse doesn't blame someone else, then it's because of our inability.

But the end is always the same – "I can't! I don't have what it takes to overcome my limitations."

It's at this point Jesus turns Bethesda into a *true* house of grace for this guy . . .

8 Jesus said to him, "Rise, take up your bed and walk." 9 And immediately the man was made well, took up his bed, and walked.

Jesus issued a command, which to obey required the man be healed.

Jesus told the guy to get up & do what he'd been unable to do before.

The man had a choice to make, to stand & walk, or stay where he was.

He obeyed, stood, picked up the little mat he'd used as a bed, & began walking.

God never calls us to do a thing without first giving us the *ability* to do it.

His command is His enabling.

But we must realize His enabling carries with it the necessity of obedience.

God does not heal the lame man so he can go on sitting on his mat among the lame.

God does not save us from sin so we can go on living in sin among the lost.

He gives us new life so that we can walk in its newness.

10 The Jews therefore said to him who was cured, "It is the Sabbath; it is not lawful for you to carry your bed."

This all took place on the Sabbath, when carrying a burden was prohibited.

As this guy leaves the area of the pools, some of the super-religious guys see him carrying his bed & nail him.

Here's another example of a man-made religious rule.

The Law of Moses never prohibited carrying a burden on the Sabbath; that was something the scribes had come up with.

But the rule had been come to be made equivalent to the law.

How careful we need to be that we don't make our own man-made rules about following God equal to the Word of God itself.

When I was in Magadan, Russia some year ago, we were ministering in a Russian

Baptist church. It was a question and answer time and there were several older Russian babushkas who were grilling us with questions about all kinds of things.

There wasn't a lot of joy in these women; they seemed to think that being godly meant being severe and stern.

Any pleasure, anything enjoyable was suspect of evil to them.

I was with three other pastors and we all loved to laugh so we'd not really gotten off to a good start with these women.

One of the questions they asked was, "If you're pastors & men of God, why do you wear jewelry?"

The only jewelry any of us had on was our wedding rings, so we asked, "What jewelry?" They pointed to our wedding rings.

We told them what they were & what they meant – but it didn't phase them.

In their minds, and to their way of thinking, all jewelry was immodest, so a violation of the Word of God. Period! There was no reasoning with these women.

They would not accept that this was a purely cultural thing and that in our culture, wearing a wedding ring was a sign of fidelity and no sign of immodesty whatsoever.

On the other hand, some years ago, one Saturday I was doing some painting & took my ring off.

I forgot to put it back on the next morning and went to church.

The next week I got a call from a woman who'd visited and really liked the service, but wanted to know something – was I married.

When I said I was she asked if I was separated from my wife.

Then she asked why, if everything was alright, wasn't I wearing my ring?

When I told her that I'd simply forgotten to put it back on, she expressed her grave displeasure, read me the riot act, and said she and her husband simply could NOT attend a church where the pastor showed so little regard for his marriage.

Here's the point – while honoring the marriage covenant IS a command of Scripture, nothing is said about rings.

Yet some people elevate their cultural or personal ideas about obeying God to the place of scripture. This is religion at its worst!

And it's what these guys did when they saw this guy carrying his bed.

11 He answered them, "He who made me well said to me, 'Take up your bed and walk.'"

Great answer! "The guy who healed me of 38 years of lameness told me to carry my bed."

12 Then they asked him, "Who is the Man who said to you, 'Take up your bed and walk'?" **13 But the one who was healed did not know who it was, for Jesus had withdrawn, a multitude being in that place.**

They wanted to know – NOT who healed the guy, but who told him to break one of their precious rules! How wrong-headed is that?

Imagine Pastor Peter, he's got 3 dozen roses in his right hand & a box of Godiva Chocolates in the other, he's making his way to his wife Jeanine, gifts

extended.

Angelina Jolie is clinging to one of his ankles, Eva Longoria to the other, both pleading with him to stay with them, but he doesn't even listen.

He kicks loose & runs to Jeanine, sweeping her up in his arms.

Then some silly critic standing by watching all this says to him, "How come you're not wearing your wedding ring?"

Ah – Roses? Chocolates? Beautifully untarnished loyalty? And you are hung up on a ring?

That's these guys in their getting bent about the man carrying his bed after being healed of 38 years of lameness.

As soon as Jesus healed the guy, He slipped away into the crowd that was in that place.

How unlike so much of the supposed healing ministries we see today, who make a big show of healing.

Listen, when it's really the power of God at work, there's no need to grandstand and draw attention to it.

Those who truly operate in the power of the Spirit know that the Spirit doesn't show off.

Even Jesus withdrew after healing this guy.

He stood up, in obedience to Christ, bent over to pick up his bed, then when he turned around, Jesus was gone.

14 Afterward Jesus found him in the temple, and said to him, "See, you have been made well. Sin no more, lest a worse thing come upon you."

Some time later, the guy went up to the temple, something he'd not been able to do before.

He was probably there to give thanks to God.

Jesus found him there, & affirmed that his healing was permanent.

The phrase, "you have been made well" is in the perfect tense which means something lasting.

This may imply that some of the healings associated with the Pool of Bethesda didn't last.

Jesus then warned the man that he must make and end with sin, or something even worse than lameness may come upon him.

Many commentators conclude from this that the man's lameness was the result of sin.

It's clear from other passages in the Bible that illness or affliction is not *always* the result of sin, but it *can* be. That seems to be the case here.

So Jesus tells the guy that whole his healing is permanent, if he returns to his sin, something worse than lameness will result.

15 The man departed and told the Jews that it was Jesus who had made him well.

The motive behind this is uncertain.

Did he tell them because he wanted to be in good with them, or because he wanted them to realize the power of Jesus? We don't know.

Whatever the reason behind his report to the authorities, it provides the platform

for John's next great discourse on the Person of Jesus.

J. Jesus is Equal to the Father 5:16-47

1. Persecution by "the Jews" 5:16

16 For this reason the Jews persecuted Jesus, and sought to kill Him, because He had done these things on the Sabbath.

All 4 of the gospels make it clear that one of the things that so incensed the leaders against Jesus was His repeated healing of the infirm on the Sabbath.

To their minds, because Jesus was just a man, healing was work, & work was verboten on the Sabbath.

But Jesus wasn't just man; He was also God – & because God is all powerful, when He does a thing, there's no *effort* involved, so no work.

Besides, noting in the Law said that healing was forbidden on the Sabbath.

Jesus showed them how even in their own rules they permitted the owner of an animal to rescue it from a pit on the Sabbath. [Luke 14:5]

The sanctity of life of an animal was held as a higher principle than the law of the Sabbath.

If that were the case, then how could they not see that when the Messiah came, He would rescue men & women who'd fallen into the pit of disease & affliction?

Airtight reasoning – but they didn't buy it.

In fact, they began plotting how they might do away with him altogether.

Strange how religion can be a mask for *murder*.

2. The unity of Father & Son 5:17-23

17 But Jesus answered them, "My Father has been working until now, and I have been working." 18 Therefore the Jews sought all the more to kill Him, because He not only broke the Sabbath, but also said that God was His Father, making Himself equal with God.

It would have been the politically expedient thing for Jesus to back off and let things cool down.

But political expediency isn't what He aims for.

He isn't trying to win a popularity contest or get elected to office.

Obedience to the Father & faithfulness to His mission are His only objectives.

So He spells it out to the ones who have already taken their stand against Him.

Jesus uses words here so pointed as to remove any doubt on His opponents part about Who He's claiming to be.

1) He calls God, "My Father".

The Jews referred to God as "our Father" and might occasionally in prayer say "my Father" but would always clarify it by saying "in heaven."

No one would dare say simply, "my Father;" that was much too familiar and was considered blasphemy.

2) Then Jesus links His work to the Father's work.

The Jews understood that not only did God create the universe but that it was sustained by the Word of His power.

His present work was to hold all things together and press them toward their

ultimate goal which was the Messianic Age.

Jesus here says that He is vitally & integrally united to that very work. There was no clearer way of saying He was one with & equal to the Father. They understood this.

There are cults today who say that Jesus never claimed to be God.

Actually, He did, in the clearest possible way to the Jews of His day.

The proof of that is the way they reacted, as we see here.

19 Then Jesus answered and said to them, “Most assuredly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He sees the Father do; for whatever He does, the Son also does in like manner. ²⁰ For the Father loves the Son, and shows Him all things that He Himself does; and He will show Him greater works than these, that you may marvel.

²¹ For as the Father raises the dead and gives life to *them*, even so the Son gives life to whom He will.

Jesus goes on, piling proof on top of proof as to Who He is and what role He plays in the Work of God.

Jesus claims first of all that His life is lived in *complete submission* to the Father’s.

Whatever Jesus does, the Father is actually doing through Him.

This is why later Jesus can say to Philip – “If you have seen Me, you’ve seen the Father.”

Then Jesus said there’s nothing the Father knows He hasn’t shown the Son, their knowledge is co-equal.

The very power to raise the dead to life, a power only God possesses, is a power Jesus has.

22 For the Father judges no one, but has committed all judgment to the Son, ²³ that all should honor the Son just as they honor the Father. He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent Him.

One of the great titles the Jews had assigned God was *Judge*.

We see this repeatedly in the Psalms and Prophets.

Yet here Jesus says He is the agent of God’s judgment.

All the honor to which God is due is only properly shown by honoring Jesus.

This is something all those cults who relegate Jesus to some lesser role would be well advised to consider.

3. The Son & Judgment 5:24-30

24 “Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life.

Jesus’ says that HIS WORD is to be taken as the Word of God.

Who would dare to say this?

The options are simple – a mentally-ill megalomaniac, an outrageous con-man, or God!

The only option that fits for Jesus is the last.

Hearing & believing IN Jesus results in eternal life.

No judgment falls on the one who come to faith in Christ because that judgment has passed to Him. That's what the cross is all about.

There are 2 great moments of judgment for humanity: The Cross that occurred 2000 years ago, & the Great White Throne that comes at the end of the Millennium.

At the Great White Throne, the books will be opened, and all those not found written in the Book of Life will have the full account of there lives with all their sins read out. [Rev. 20:12]

Then they will receive the just punishment for their sins.

Not only will they be consigned to an eternity in hell for the greatest sin of rejecting Christ, but they'll receive judgment commensurate to the rest of their sins.

The other moment of judgment was at the Cross when Jesus paid for the all sins of all those who put their faith in Him.

He said, "It is finished," because it was.

God would now be unjust to judge believers because Jesus has already paid the penalty for their sins.

And this is why it is unwise for us to sit in judgment on one another – If the Father will not judge us because of the Cross, how can we?

25 Most assuredly, I say to you, the hour is coming, and now is, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God; and those who hear will live. 26 For as the Father has life in Himself, so He has granted the Son to have life in Himself, 27 and has given Him authority to execute judgment also, because He is the Son of Man. 28 Do not marvel at this; for the hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear His voice 29 and come forth— those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation.

The Jews rightly held that history was headed toward a reckoning when the good would be vindicated and rewarded while the evil would be condemned.

Jesus verifies that belief, but says He is the executor of the plan of God for such final judgment & the watershed of decision.

What decides one's fate is how they come down about who He is and what He has done.

30 I can of Myself do nothing. As I hear, I judge; and My judgment is righteous, because I do not seek My own will but the will of the Father who sent Me.

In all He has said here, Jesus was completely surrendered to the Father's will.

None of this has been His own will in opposition to God.

The Father & Son are in such intimate communion Jesus makes an equivalency of wills between them.

4. Four witnesses to the Son 5:31-47

a. John the Baptizer vs. 31-35

31 “If I bear witness of Myself, My witness is not true.

If the only thing Jesus had going for Him was His own rap, people *could* & right *should*, dismiss Him.

But He wasn't just making hollow claims. He wasn't His own PR.

- 1) His words were perfectly in line with the revealed Word of God.
- 2) His life was a perfect demonstration of godliness.
- 3) His works were an expression of divine power.
- 4) And there was one who'd already come pointing to Him as Messiah . . .

32 There is another who bears witness of Me, and I know that the witness which He witnesses of Me is true. 33 You have sent to John, and he has borne witness to the truth. 34 Yet I do not receive testimony from man, but I say these things that you may be saved. 35 He was the burning and shining lamp, and you were willing for a time to rejoice in his light.

As we've seen in earlier studies, John was accepted by the common people and several of the rulers as a true prophet.

Yet from the beginning, John had made it clear he was NOT the Messiah; he was only the forerunner.

John made it clear Jesus was the One he'd been speaking of.

But Jesus didn't depend on John's testimony alone.

It was the Father's own testimony to Jesus that surpassed all.

Where was that testimony to be found? Let's read on . . .

b. the works of Jesus v. 36

36 But I have a greater witness than John's; for the works which the Father has given Me to finish—the very works that I do—bear witness of Me, that the Father has sent Me.

The miracles, the signs, the wonders Jesus performed in such abundance, these all verified Who He was.

But miracles isn't all Jesus means by the word “works” here; He means the proclamation of the gospel as well as its execution by going to the cross.

All of this was the work God had given Him to do.

c. the Father vs. 37-44

37 And the Father Himself, who sent Me, has testified of Me. You have neither heard His voice at any time, nor seen His form. 38 But you do not have His word abiding in you, because whom He sent, Him you do not believe. 39 You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me.

The greatest testimony to Christ was the one that was to be found, not in the miracles, but in the OT prophecies.

The Jews had made the study of the Tanach the most important thing in their lives.

They believed all the mysteries of life & the universe were locked in its pages.

Many of the most religious Jews believed that immortality was found by studying the Scriptures, specially the Torah, the law of God.

Jesus made it clear, that the single unifying thread that ties all of Scripture together was Him.

What Jesus says in v. 39 means that the key for understanding the Bible is to look for how it points to Him.

There was a mystical view of interpreting the Scriptures that held that if you filled your mind with the Word of God, & meditated on the name of God, ‘Yahweh’, you could have a vision of the divine glory; the Shekinah would illumine your inner eyes.

Jesus says that no one has seen the Father – but if you really see what the Scriptures say, you’ll see *the Son looking back at you* because *He is* the Word of God.

40 But you are not willing to come to Me that you may have life. 41 “I do not receive honor from men. 42 But I know you, that you do not have the love of God in you. 43 I have come in My Father’s name, and you do not receive Me; if another comes in his own name, him you will receive.

All their study was useless because they refused to give honor where honor was due.

44 How can you believe, who receive honor from one another, and do not seek the honor that comes from the only God?

For all their pretense at godliness, they had no real desire to know or honor God.

They were merely trying to look good in front of one another.

It was empty religious posturing.

They might be able fool one another and ,make each other think they were pious, but God knew it was all just a religious game of one upmanship.

d. Moses vs. 45-47

45 Do not think that I shall accuse you to the Father; there is one who accuses you—Moses, in whom you trust. 46 For if you believed Moses, you would believe Me; for he wrote about Me. 47 But if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe My words?”

This was the most stinging rebuke of all because they fancied themselves as Moses’ direct descendants.

But Jesus made it clear – Moses ministry pointed to Him.

If they didn’t understand that, they didn’t understand anything.

Many Christians avoid the OT in favor of the NT.

What Jesus says here ought to convince us that studying the OT, especially the Law, is a great way to better understand the Person & work of Jesus.

[1] Mat. 13:57 Mark 6:4 Luke 4:24