

The following is a rough transcript, not in its final form and may be updated.

## Claims Validated

### John 5:30-36

**Intro:** The content of **ch5** deals almost entirely with answering the critical question of how a person can know God. In theological terms, this is the question as epistemology and it actually has two parts to it. The first part deals with the means by which one can know God. What's the channel or method by which God reveals Himself? The second part concerns verification. Once we become aware of the channel of divine revelation, by what means is the channel then verified? Or, how can we know that this means of knowing God can be trusted?

Thankfully, both parts of this are dealt with in **ch5**. We've already discussed the first part. In **vs17-29**, Jesus declares Himself to be equal with God and, thus, the only One through whom God can be known. He's claimed to be both the giver of life as well as the One entrusted with final judgment. This all means that Jesus Himself is the channel by which man can know God because Jesus is God. It's at this point that the second part of the question would naturally arise. "Jesus says He is God. Well, what evidence is given to validate that claim?" "Why should the Jews believe His testimony? Why should they consider His statements to be reliable?" It is also at this point in His discourse that Jesus begins to address these very important questions. He's about to provide to the Jews who are plotting against Him some indisputable evidence that will verify His claims beyond any shadow of a doubt.

Now, it may seem ridiculous to us today that Jesus' claims about Himself would require any validation at all. He's God, we know that. But we must consider this from the Jews perspective of that time. Jesus doesn't offer evidence because His claims need validation but rather, in deference to the procedure of Jewish law, which required 2 or 3 witnesses to prove of any fact. Jesus now cites 3 independent testimonies that reinforce and corroborate His own. They are the testimony of John the Baptist, the witness of Jesus' miracles, and the witness of the OT Scriptures. These supportive witnesses are important for us because they're still valid. They demand belief in Christ's claims.

---

Before we look in detail at the witness of John the Baptist, Jesus' miracles and OT Scriptures, we first need to understand something about their nature and why it is that Jesus appeals to these 3 in particular. The main thing we need to see is that when Jesus appeals to these supplementary witnesses to His claims, He's not appealing to mere facts or circumstances or (God forbid) what someone's opinion of Him is. What Jesus is actually appealing to here is the witness that the Father has made on His behalf. Thus, just as Jesus is content to seek the will of God in all His actions and speech (19-20), so is he content to let God bear witness to His claims. This is why the testimonies of John the Baptist, Jesus' miracles and the OT Scriptures are so important. Ultimately, they originate from the Father.

Think of it this way: you work for a big corporation and one day, a guy shows up at your house to tell you the CEO is going to promote you to the position of vice president. That would be great news, but only if the guy had really been sent by the CEO. If you call work only to discover that no one's ever heard of the guy, you can dismiss it as a cruel practical joke. But, if he was truly sent by the CEO then you know that his offer is genuine. In the same way, the question of whether these supplementary witnesses are really from God or not, is important. This is the point of the verses that begin this section of Christ's teaching.

---

**30-32- vs30** relates to the context of final judgment in **vs27-29**. Father and Son are completely unified in that as well.

In **vs31**, Jesus is not saying that His own witness of Himself is not true or valid, it is; but, in light of the legal principle of the OT that says 2 or 3 witnesses are required to establish a fact, His personal witness alone is not sufficient to meet that requirement. It was legally impossible for anyone to be accepted on his own words. Of course, Jesus doesn't have to rely solely on His own testimony because there is another who bears witness of Him!

Who is the "other" witness? It can be none other than God the Father. Everything Jesus did was in deference to and in obedience to the Father. He stated in **ch4** that doing the Father's will was the sustenance of His life. But, not only was Jesus willing to submit to the Father's will in all things; He was also willing to leave His ultimate vindication in the Father's capable hands. Thus, it is the Father who is vindicating the Son by providing Him indisputable credentials. The witness of the Father can be seen in the

testimony of John, in the miracles, and in Scripture. Each of the 3 has the Father's unmistakable fingerprints all over them. Their sufficiency is rooted in God the Father

The point of all this is that the value of these testimonies can be traced to the fact that it is the testimony of God. God the Father not only sent God the Son, through whom He may be known. He's also provided other witnesses so that people may both know that He has spoken in Christ and that they now have no excuse for neglecting to put their trust in Him. God has removed the loopholes – trusting in Christ is the most rational thing a person can ever do! Not only are His claims true, they are proven to be true by no less than God the Father, the Ancient of Days! Let's now look at the first of these 3 divinely provided witnesses – John the Baptist.

---

**33-35-** In John, a witness had been given to the Jews that they could both understand and appreciate. They even held him in high regard for a time; but in the end, they did not receive John's witness. You- Jesus tells them, "You yourselves had a witness." The religious leaders were the ones who sent the delegation of inquiry to John to find out who He was. John told them exactly who he was and who he wasn't. He even told them that another was coming after him who would be greater than him. John even pointed Jesus out as the Lamb of God and Savior of the world.

has borne- this phrase indicates that John's message was a continuing truth. His words weren't spoken into empty air and then forgotten. He witnessed of Jesus, they heard it and that truth continued with them. This also has to mean that their rejection of the truth of John's message must also have been continuous.

Of course, Jesus didn't need or require any human testimony to validate His claims of divinity but He refers to John's witness in order to provide further confirmation of the truth for the Jews. Jesus is directing their attention to John's witness because it is a particular message that could start them on the path to salvation. This was precisely the case for a few of the 12, they had been John's disciples but they left him to follow Jesus on the basis of John's testimony.

Jesus then gives His witness of John: a burning and shining lamp. A lamp shows people the way. John bore a clear and consistent witness to Jesus

and the Jews were initially happy to have him around. He was a local celebrity for a while. The religious crowd liked the idea of having a prophet of God roaming the countryside but they never took John seriously, they never really came to grips with his message. John was steadily and unwaveringly pointing the way to Jesus with his stern call to repentance and the religious crowd, who claimed to be God's people and to be seeking God, steadily ignored his message. They rejoiced in God's gracious gift of a prophet to their generation, then they promptly turned their backs on him.

The value of John's witness is that it was the witness of a prophet sent from God. The fact that he was constantly pointing away from himself and toward Jesus is evidence of his prophetic role. He didn't preach of his own accord, he was sent with a message. He was a lamp that was set on fire by God to bear witness of Jesus. Jesus says that the purpose of John's life and ministry was to verify His claim to be God. Was John correct? Is Jesus God?

---

**36-** The next witness Jesus appeals to is His works, or rather the works that the Father has given Him to do. As great a John the Baptist was, Jesus says this particular witness is even greater than his. Now, in a general sense, the term work refers to everything Jesus did but in a more specific sense, which specific works of Jesus are most prominent? Miracles! Are miracles valid evidence of divinity? Not necessarily, many unseemly characters in the Bible had the ability to do supernatural things. So, how do Christ's miracles provide a witness for His claims?

The question is probably best answered when we consider that John uses the term "sign" when referring to miracles performed by Jesus. Sign: a distinguishing mark or token. In the OT, circumcision was a sign of God's covenant with Israel. In the NT, finding baby Jesus in the manger was a sign to the shepherds that the angel's message was true. The sign of Jonah served as a token of Christ's death and resurrection. A sign is a symbol. It's a pointer to the object it signifies. A miracle may become a sign by pointing to the unusual ability or character of the one who performs it.

What do the miracles recorded by John point to? Christ's glory! In each instance, the sign draws attention to Jesus himself and in particular to his divine nature revealed in his works. But, the signs that Jesus performed are more than just mere symbols. In some cases, at least the ones recorded in

John, they actually contain Christ – they are part of Him. They are actually part of Jesus Christ’s revelation of the Father.

Again, all of Christ’s works are signs, not just His miracles. Everything He did was done to reveal God. Of course, some of the things Jesus did were more significant than others, which is why John is forced to choose from the vast works of Jesus those that are most helpful for the church and most central to a true understanding of Christ’s person.

What are the signs John chooses to record and what do they reveal about the nature and character of Jesus?

---

1. Turning water into wine (2:1-11). This was the 1<sup>st</sup> of Christ’s signs. The motive for this miracle was simply so that the “glory” of Christ might be revealed and that the disciples might believe as a result of it. What did it reveal? It revealed Christ’s unity with God the Father in creative power. It also showed Jesus to be the bringer of Christian joy. John’s point is that Jesus alone makes life joyous and abundant.

2. Healing the nobleman’s son (4:46-54). The 2<sup>nd</sup> sign shows the power of Jesus to overcome sin and heal illness. It also shows Jesus’ ability to calm a troubled spirit and instill faith. The nobleman was led to stronger faith.

3. Healing the lame man (5:1-18). The 3<sup>rd</sup> sign. The point of this miracle was not to provoke faith on the part of those who witnessed it. It actually made the Jews angry, they persecuted Jesus and wanted to kill Him. It did not even provoke faith on the part of the man who was healed. What was its purpose? The point is that we’re just like the disabled man spiritually. We’ve all sinned, and the spiritual inability to seek Christ comes from our sin. We can’t rise to meet Him. But, it’s precisely when we are disabled spiritually—blind, lame, and paralyzed—that Jesus comes to us to save us and free us from sin’s bondage. This miracle reveals God to be a God of great grace.

4. Feeding the 5000 (6:1-14). The point is not just that Jesus is able to multiply bread but that He can satisfy the hunger of the soul. Have you found that Jesus is able to satisfy your deepest hunger or thirst? He can!

5. Walking on water (6:16-21). The point of this miracle is that Jesus possesses power over the laws of nature.

6. Healing the man born blind (9). This is actually a double miracle, involving the restoration of physical and spiritual sight to one who was born physically and spiritually blind. What's the point? Show Jesus as the light of the world. The faith of the man who'd been born blind but who had come to both physical and spiritual sight is contrasted with the unbelief of the authorities who, although confronted with the true spiritual light, prefer to live in darkness.

7. Raising Lazarus (11:1-46). The last of the public signs, Christ's progressive display of power over nature, sin, and sickness comes to a climax in the total victory of life over death. The miracle shows that Jesus is the source of eternal life, that it may be enjoyed here and now, and that the same power that assures it now will also, after the death of the body, raise the dead to a new and better existence beyond.

---

What is the purpose of the miracles? Again, the supernatural in itself doesn't prove the divine origin of the one performing it. Even the devils can do miraculous things. The true value of miracles consists in their nature; in what they reveal about God the Father and the Lord Jesus. The miracles of Christ, or for that matter, all His works, both miraculous and non-miraculous, show us His nature. They disclose His unique ability to fill the vacuum of the heart.

Put another way, the miracles recorded in John's Gospel did not occur as the result of faith; they were occasions for faith to respond. They were given both to provoke and strengthen faith. Have they done this for you? They should!

Here's the thing: if the miracles are true, then there has never been and never will be a person like Jesus. Isn't this provocative? Does it not demand that you investigate Him yourself to see if the things written about Him and claimed by Him are valid? If you won't do this, then you show by your inactions that the difficulties you have with belief are not rational. It's not like God hasn't provided enough evidence for a thinking person to evaluate Christ's claims. Your problem is a moral one. The problem is **sin**. But, if you'll investigate Christ's worth and character with an open mind, you'll discover Him to be what countless others have also found Him to be—the Son of God and your Savior.

---

Christian, not only did Christ's works bear witness of His claims but our works bear witness of His claims as well. If we claim the name of Jesus, if we declare that He is the Lord and Savior of our lives, then our actions will testify to the power of Jesus Christ and the truth of who we are in Him. If our works are dead (wood, hat or stubble) then it proves we are carnal, walking after the flesh and such a witness will dishonor and grieve Him whose name we bear.

But, if we abound in good works, not to earn merit but out of obedience to Him who has prepared beforehand that we should walk in them, then this will show that we are walking after the Spirit and will cause those who see our good works to glorify our Father in heaven. It's not about living for our own glory or pleasure but for His!

---

