

## “Can I Get a Witness?”

### I. **INTRO:**

- A. What we have in **chapter 5** is the courtroom drama of **3 episodes** of, **not L.A.Law**, but **Jerusalem Law!** (*Dun Dun*)
1. **Episode #1** we had **last week**, w/Jesus healing a paralytic man, at the Pool of Bethesda, on the Sabbath. **Today we'll watch Episode 2 & 3, “Christ on Trial!”**
  2. **Episode #2** includes Christ's **6 Claims!**
  3. **Episode #3** Jesus introduces **5 Witnesses**, to substantiate His claims.
- B. This is the 1st recorded hostility towards Jesus in John's narrative.

### II. **6 CLAIMS! (16-30)**

- A. The godless Pharisees condemn Jesus on 2 counts: *Heals on Sabbath & Makes Himself equal w/God.*
1. Jesus responds back with these **6 claims!**
- B. What connection does vs.17 have with His healing on the Sabbath?
1. This was **the Father** “*working*” through me on the Sabbath.
- C. **FIRST CLAIM, I'M EQUAL W/GOD!** (17-20)
- D. Throughout the passage Jesus never refers to God generically as *our* Father.
1. It is always *My Father*, or *The father*.
    - a) In doing so He claims a unique relationship w/God.
    - b) Also, equality in the work they share.
      - (1) **Like a shadow**, which is neither **identical to nor independent of** the substance from which it is cast, **so** the Son & the Father are **distinct from, yet dependent upon**, each other.<sup>1</sup>
- E. (18) One **can say** they don't believe Jesus was God (i.e. Equal with) **but you can't say** that it wasn't what Jesus was trying to communicate. **It's very clear!**
1. **By the way, this verse is the same in the J.W. New World Translation.**

<sup>1</sup> Charles Swindoll; John; pg.78.

- F. **Jews** objected to Jesus because of their staunch **monotheism**.
1. **Christians** are **monotheist** as well, yet maintain that the nature of the one true God is that He is Triune; **3 persons - one God**.
  2. To the Jewish mind, Jesus' claim to be God was **blasphemous** because it suggested the idea of **2 Gods**.
  3. Jesus' claim however was that He was **God in human form**.
  4. **Trinity: 1 in essence & 3 in person**.
    - a) Not **Modalism** - 3 modes in which God works (Father, son, husband)
    - b) Not **Tritheism** - 3 beings who together makes up God.
      - (1) **Modalism** is too close; **Tritheism** is too separate.
      - (2) Trinity doesn't refer to **parts** or **roles**.
  5. **How they are similar!** - The work of **Salvation** is in 1 sense common to all 3 persons.
  6. **How they are different!** - **Yet** in **activity**, there are differing operations. **The Father** initiates creation & redemption; **The Son** redeems the creation; **The H.S.** Regenerates & sanctifies, applying redemption to believers.
  7. The doctrine of the Trinity **does not** fully explain the mysterious character of God. **Rather**, it **sets the boundaries** outside of which **we must not step**.
    - a) It defines the limits of our finite reflection.
- G. **SECOND CLAIM, I'M THE GIVER OF LIFE!** (21,26)
- H. He claims to have the **same power** the Father has over the dead.
1. This will be witnessed by them in ch.11 in the raising of Lazarus.
- I. **THIRD CLAIM, I'M THE FINAL JUDGE!** (22,23)
- J. **Today**, Jesus is the **Savior**; **Tomorrow**, He will be the **Judge**.
1. **Most people think that the Father** is the final Judge of mankind. [Jesus will be]
- K. Those who claim to worship/honor God **but ignore the Son** are not even worshipping God
1. **They are only fooling themselves**.
  2. **Just as a judge** is **esteemed as "Your Honor"**, & all participants **rise** when he enters the courtroom, **so** it is only fitting that **the highest judge**, enthroned at the right hand of God the Father, should receive such honor from his creatures

- L. **FOURTH CLAIM, I DETERMINE MAN'S DESTINY!** (24)
- M. **Most Assuredly** or **Truly, truly** - ring out like a **town crier's** "*hear ye, hear ye*" drawing attention to this important message.
1. It's important because it carries **good news**: eternal life w/o the threat of judgment. **But 2 things are required:**
    - a) A **hearing ear** & a **believing heart!**
    - b) **Anyone** who accepts this gift **by faith** buries forever the fear of eternal separation from God. **There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus...For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. Rom8:1,38,39**
- N. Not only does Jesus claim to be **the judge**, He claims to be **the ticket out of the courtroom** for any who stand guilty!
- O. **FIFTH CLAIM, I WILL RAISE THE DEAD!** (25-29)
- P. In another dramatic "*hear ye, hear ye*" announcement, Jesus gives us some of the Bible's clearest information regarding **resurrection**. **3 crystal clear facts:**
1. There will definitely be life after death.
  2. Every person will be affected by it.
  3. Mankind will fall into 2, & only 2, categories.
- Q. (29) **Done good** - **not works**, but the natural outgrowth of the **saving gospel's seed**, planted in the heart of the believer at the time of new birth. *If it's there it will sprout!*
1. 3 Jn.11 **Beloved, do not imitate what is evil, but what is good.**  
**He who does good is of God, but he who does evil has not seen God.**
  2. The **"good"** life emerges through a **relationship** w/Christ;
  3. The **"evil"** life encroaches through **separation** from Him.
- R. The **only escape route** from judgment/condemnation/spiritual death, on the last day...*faith in Jesus Christ*.
- S. **SIXTH CLAIM, I'M ALWAYS DOING THE WILL OF GOD!** (30)
- T. As a **shadow** does not move on its own initiative, so Jesus moves **only in cadence** with the fathers footsteps. [or *hand-n-glove* analogy]
- U. So, **Have Christ's radical claims** made any **radical changes** in your life?

### III. **5 WITNESSES! (31-47)**

- A. (31) **Not true** - Not that it's *false*, but it wouldn't be *valid as testimony* (needed 2/3 Deut 19:15)
- B. So ultimately, **how do you prove your case?**...you need witnesses!
1. So, **Can I get a witness?** Yes, 5 witnesses are introduced to verify His claims!
  2. Imagine yourself, as a juror & Jesus on trial as the defendant.
- C. **Jesus, You can call Your first witness to the stand...**
- D. **FIRST WITNESS, GOD THE FATHER!** (32,37,38)
- E. (32) **Another** - *another of the same kind*. [αλλοσ] (14:16 **send you another/H.S.**)
1. Heteros (ετεροσ) - another of a diff kind (Paul speaking of *another gospel* in Gal.1:6,7)
- F. **Bears witness** - Gk. indicates *continual action*. **The Father continues to testify to the claims of Christ.**
1. **At Jesus Birth** (the Father announced the arrival w/prophets, angels, & a star);
  2. **At Jesus Baptism** (the Father testified, "**This is my beloved Son...**")
  3. **And later in Jesus' life** (the Father reaffirms His own testimony at: **the Transfiguration; the Crucifixion; the Res.; & the Ascension**)
- G. **SECOND WITNESS, JOHN THE BAPTIST!** (33-35)
- H. Now John is called to the stand. **The burning & shining lamp.**
1. **Heat** in the heart; **light** in the mind! [*Both, head & heart are needed*]
  2. Jonathan Edwards from his *Religious Affections*: **There must be light in the understanding as well as the fervency of heart, for if the heart has heat without light, there can be nothing divine or heavenly in that heart. On the other hand, where there is light without heat, such as stored with notions and speculations but having a cold and unaffected heart, there can be nothing divine in that either.**
- I. (35b) **They were willing to listen to John for a time** - **but then** like **moths** flitting near a candle, these Jews had swarmed around John, **until** they got too close to the flame. **Then**, one by one, they took flight. **The light, they liked. It was the heat that drove them away!**
- J. **THIRD WITNESS, JESUS' OWN WORKS!** (36)
- K. The defense now moves from **verbal** to **visual**. **Exhibit A.**
1. He's already turned Cana well **water** into the finest of aged **wines**; **healed** a gov official's son long-distance; & restored a paralytic. [*And there's more to come!*]
  - a) **Like: feed 5000; walk on water; heal blind man; raise Lazarus from dead.**

- L. **FOURTH WITNESS, THE SCRIPTURES!** (39-44)
- M. **Search - to investigate.** It corresponds to the *Hebrew technical term* used by the **Rabbis** for the study of the Scriptures.
- N. This answers the question...**Is it possible to study the Bible w/o finding spiritual life?**
1. **Answer...yes. What's lacking?** Any who are not willing to come to Jesus for relationship. [Read 2 Cor. 3:14-16]
  2. **God's word** was not truly **abiding** in them; & **God's Son** was not the **object** of their faith.
- O. It's easy to get caught up in the technical, peripheral, or superficial stuff.
1. It's easy for a **Lawyer** to become **enamored** w/the **intricacies of the law** & yet never develop a **heart for justice**.
  2. It's easy for a **Doctor** to become **swept up** in the **state-of-the-art medicine & machines** & yet never develop a **heart of compassion**.
  3. It's easy for the serious student of the Scriptures to become **enraptured** w/ **exegesis** instead of Jesus, carrying on a love affair w/the **printed page** rather than w/**the person of Christ**.
    - a) **The Bible** was given not simply as a **legal document** or **self-help book** but as a **love letter**. And if that letter doesn't draw us irresistibly to Jesus, then its possible that we, like the prosecutorial Jews, do not have His Word abiding in us!<sup>2</sup>
- P. **FIFTH WITNESS, MOSES!** (45-47)
- Q. Jesus now turns the *courtroom* tables & points His finger at His accusers.
1. Jesus pulls His *trump card*, His *ace* from the deck of Jewish heroes...**MOSES!**
  2. **Why Moses?** - One of the founding fathers of Judaism; spearheaded the Exodus; gave them the Law; was looked up to w/reverence.
- R. (45) **Accuse** - a legal technical term to **bring charges** in court.
- S. (46) **When did Moses write of Jesus?** - Deut.18:15,19 **The Lord your God will raise up for you a Prophet** like me from your midst, from your brethren. **Him you shall hear...**And it shall be that whoever will **not hear** My words, which He speaks in My name, I will require it of him.
1. **Peter** backs up, it was speaking about Christ, in **Acts 3:18-23**.
- T. **THE VERDICT!**
- U. The defense rests. **As a member of the jury, you must deliberate. You must weigh the evidence.** It's a sobering decision, for the verdict you reach about Christ is a serious one.
1. It's quite literally a matter of **life** or **death** - **your life** or **your death!**

<sup>2</sup> Charles Swindoll; pg.86