

Bible Studies for Enquirers and New Believers: A Series of Eight Studies

Study 5 – Five Witnesses to the Lord Jesus Christ

taken from
Bible Studies for Enquirers and New Believers
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Prayer: Blessed be thou, O Lord; teach me thy statutes! (Psalm 119:12)

Reading: John 5:30-47

Memory Verse: John 5:39- 40

In this discourse to his Jewish persecutors the Lord Jesus Christ mentions five witnesses as to who he is.

The Witness of John the Baptist (John 5:33-35)

John, the first cousin of Jesus, was the last of the Hebrew prophets of the Old Covenant.

1. How is he described in John 1:6-7?
2. When the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to question John, what did he say? (John 1:19-23)

John was a burning and a shining lamp in whose light the Jews were willing to rejoice for a while. John is only the lamp kindled at the Light, who is Jesus, the Light of the world. (John 5:35).

3. Read John 8:12. From whom was John's light derived? He was like the Sufi disciple lighting his lamp at the master's light ('*Urdu igtibas*' – obtaining or borrowing fire from another).
4. What further testimony to the truth does John give in John 1:23-36 and John 3:22-36?

In essence, Jesus said to his persecutors that they trusted John and went to hear him. They did not accept his testimony but they liked the thrill of his desert conventions, processions and gatherings. As a lamp attracts moths so John the Baptist attracted the crowds. Jesus pointed all this out to them in the hope that they might be saved.

The Witness of the Works of Jesus (John 5:36)

The works that the Lord Jesus performed are witness to the fact that the Father sent him. These works include his miracles (the Greek is '*dunamis*', an act of power) and signs (the Greek is '*semeion*'). Examples of miracles are the healing of the impotent man in John 5:2-9, the giving of spiritual life to Nicodemus in John 3:1-15 and to the Samaritan woman in John 4. Jesus' works include everything relating to his incarnation and what follows – his sinlessness and life of perfect obedience and submission to God (John 17:4). The works of Jesus reinforce his words and serve to strengthen the faith of his followers.

The Witness of God the Father (John 5:37-38)

The Father who sent Jesus bears witness to him. The Greek aorist tense for the verb 'sent' indicates sent once and for all (at the incarnation). It is followed by the perfect tense indicating that the Father has borne witness to Jesus for a long time past and is still doing so.

The Witness of the Old Testament Scriptures (John 5:39-44)

Look up Luke 24:27. All the books of the Bible in some way point to Jesus. The Old Testament contains many prophecies about his birth, life, death, resurrection and vindication. List three such prophecies from the Old Testament and give the references for their fulfillment in the New Testament. The Jews searched the Scriptures but refused to come to Jesus for eternal life although the scriptures pointed to him as the saviour and Messiah. They had no desire to find the truth. The Greek word 'used' in John 5:39 translated 'search' does not suggest spiritual penetration but meticulous analysis. The Jews had scrutinized with the utmost minuteness the written word (*graphai*) and missed the living word (*logos*) which spoke of the Messiah. Jesus asks them how they can believe seeing that they receive glory from another and do not seek the glory which comes from the one God.

The Witness of the Prophet Moses (John 5:45-47)

Moses was the greatest figure of the Old Testament. He wrote the Pentateuch – the five books of the Law (*taurah*). The Jews claimed to be zealous practitioners of the Mosaic Law. But Jesus told the Jews not to appeal to their great prophet Moses for vindication because his witness condemns them. Moses wrote about the coming Messiah (Deuteronomy 18:15). If they had believed what Moses wrote they would have accepted Jesus.

Conclusion

Despite the witness of John the Baptist, the works of Jesus, the Father, the Old Testament scriptures and the prophet Moses, the Jews would not come to Jesus that they might have spiritual life. Their wills were perverse. Compare John 5:40 with Psalm 5:10. Their minds were darkened. Look up 2 Corinthians 4:4, John 5:38 and 2 Corinthians 3:15. Their hearts were corrupt. See Jeremiah 17:9. The basic question for them and for us is: do we seek only for information about God or for fellowship with God? Do we want only to know about Jesus or do we want to know Jesus? Is our emphasis on information only? Or on personal relationship?

Questions

1. Do you only know about Jesus Christ or do you know him personally?
2. Are you giving people only advice and information about Jesus or are you trying to introduce them to him?