



International Bible Lesson

International Bible Study Commentary

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Who Witnessed for Jesus?

John 5:30-38

And the Father himself, which hath sent me, hath borne witness of me. Ye have neither heard his voice at any time, nor seen his shape. And ye have not his word abiding in you: for whom he hath sent, him ye believe not (John 5:37-38—KJV).

And the Father who sent Me, He has testified of Me. You have neither heard His voice at any time nor seen His form. You do not have His word abiding in you, for you do not believe Him whom He sent (John 5:37-38—NASB).

And the Father who sent me has himself testified on my behalf. You have never heard his voice or seen his form, and you do not have his word abiding in you, because you do not believe him whom he has sent (John 5:37-38—NRSV).

When Jesus debated with religious leaders, He used legal language they would understand. For example, in John 5:31, when Jesus said, “If I testify about myself, my testimony is not true,” He did not mean that He did not speak the truth about himself. Rather, according to Jewish law, if a person made claims about themselves and no one else confirmed their claims; then, their claims were unreliable. In John 8:17, Jesus discussed this legal principle when He told the religious leaders, “In your law it is written that the testimony of two witnesses is true.” Jesus testified about himself, and He also said others testified in His behalf. First, God the Father, who sent Him into the world, testified in His behalf. Jesus declared that He did what He saw the Father doing and He spoke what He heard the Father speaking. As He heard the Father making judgments, He judged; furthermore, His judgments were just, because He always did the will of His

Father. Second, in addition to the testimony of the Father, Jesus reminded the religious leaders that John the Baptist prophesied about Him and John had prepared people for His coming. Third, more than John’s testimony, Jesus said that His works in the world proved that God the Father had sent Him. Jesus said that if these religious leaders had truly believed in and remained true to God’s word, then they would have recognized the actions of the Father in His words and works.

Thinking Further

1. What are some of the actions that Jesus can take without consulting His Father?
2. What did Jesus mean when He said His testimony about himself was not true?
3. Who did Jesus say truly testified about Him?
4. Why did Jesus refer people to the human testimony of others? Why do we tell others about Jesus?
5. What and/or who did Jesus say was a greater testimony than John’s testimony?

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