Grace to You :: *Unleashing God's Truth, One Verse at a Time*

Testimony to the Deity of Christ, Part 2
Scripture: John 5:37–40
Code: 43-30

Let's go back to John chapter 5 and I have to tell you, this is a very challenging portion of Scripture. I hope as you listen to these sermons you're saying, "Wow, that's pretty simple, that's pretty clear, I can see that, I could have figured that out myself." But I would like you to know that this is one of THE most rigorous efforts that any Bible student will ever make to get this to a point where I can make it clear to you because it is so profound and because, like all parts of Scripture, we don't have every single word. We have the important words, the inspired words, the ones the Holy Spirit wanted us to have, and all of us who study the Bible could wish that the Bible were about ten times longer and we had a lot more detail. But working with what we have, this is a very challenging chapter.

I want you to own this chapter not just because it's challenging, but because it is so important. Here is revealed the most important and foundational truth that any human being will ever come to understand. And that is the truth that Jesus is God, that Jesus is God. If you don't believe that, you're going to hell forever. You can believe that and still go to hell forever, but if you don't believe that, you will go to hell forever. You must believe that Jesus is God. You must believe more than that, you must believe not only in who He is but what He did and the gospel in its fullness. But it all starts with this. So I would say to you what Jesus said about eight or nine times in the gospels—if you have ears, listen because what you hear will determine your eternal destiny. These things are written, John said, that you might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God and that believing you might have life in His name. Whoever believes will not perish but have everlasting life. If you don't believe, you'll die in your sins. And where I go, you'll never come, Jesus said.

The message of the church is not so insignificant as social justice. The message of the church is not so insignificant as redistribution of wealth. The message of the church is not so inconsequential as liberation. The message of the church is not so superficial as prosperity. The message of the church is salvation from hell through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. And it starts with who He is. And that's where we are in the flow of John's gospel. We haven't gotten to the cross and the resurrection yet, we're at the part that you have to start with, that is believing Christ is God. And as I indicated when I was praying, even His enemies knew He was claiming that, verse 18. He was making Himself equal with God. And that is exactly what He was doing.

No one can be saved who doesn't believe Jesus is God, and who doesn't believe the rest, including His death and resurrection. And I want to say that again because I want you to understand that no one can be saved who doesn't believe Jesus is God. That's how you have eternal life. This is about

eternal life, and eternal life is repeated in the opening five chapters of John, again and again, and again, and again, and it's always connected to those who believe in Jesus Christ, believing that He is God, that He is divine.

This passage then takes on critical importance because starting in verse 17 and running all the way to the end of the chapter, the theme is the deity of Jesus Christ, claims that He is making to be God necessary to be believed if one is to escape hell and have eternal life. Up to this point, that has been the emphasis. That has been the emphasis of the writer, John the Apostle. That has been the emphasis of every chapter. That has been the emphasis, of course, as well that our Lord Himself has made. It was necessary for the disciples who first followed Him to believe that He is God. It was necessary for the Samaritans from the village of Sychar to believe that He is God. It is still necessary.

So you have in this chapter then, testimony to His deity brought together and given by Jesus Himself. From verse 17 to verse 30 is His own personal testimony to His deity. And in that section, you remember, He says He is equal with God in nature, equal to God in work, equal to God in power, equal with God in truth and consequently He is equal with God in honor and worship. This is a massive claim on the part of this Galilean carpenter who is talking to Jews who want Him dead because He is assaulting their false religious system. The claim is unmistakable.

Now He has made this claim from verses 17 to 30, first person essentially, "I am God." He starts out by responding to their attack on His breaking the Sabbath because He healed a man on the Sabbath, told him to carry his bed. They say He's violated the Sabbath. He doesn't say anything about the Sabbath, He just elevates the discussion to Christological level and starts telling them who He is as if to say I'll do anything I want on the Sabbath, I'm the Lord of the Sabbath. And from there, He goes to display His deity. That's His first person claim, although He used both third and first person all the way down.

So we come to verse 31, there's a shift. He now moves from His own testimony to the testimony of someone else. Look at verse 31. "If I alone testify about Myself, My testimony is not true."

Now what does He mean by that? Does He actually mean what He says is a lie? Of course not. He is the truth. But what He means is, in your eyes, in your mind, that's not enough to establish truth. And I showed you chapter 8 where the same issue is addressed. Chapter 8 verse 12, Jesus says, "I'm the light of the world." Verse 13, "The Pharisees, again the Jews, the leaders, they say You're testifying about Yourself, Your testimony is not true." What they mean by that is we don't accept the testimony of a person. It has to be corroborated. Deuteronomy 17, 19, it has to be corroborated in the mouth of two or three witnesses. You've got to have conformation and anybody could say anything. You could say you're God, anybody can say He's God. Anybody can say He's the light of the world. But if you're the only one saying it, then we're not going to believe it.

“Jesus answered in John 8:14, ‘Even if I testify about Myself, My testimony is true for I know where I came from and where I’m going, but you do not know where I come from or where I’m going.’” So that’s the sense in which He says in verse 31, back to chapter 5, in your eyes My testimony isn’t true if I’m the only one giving it.” Crazy people say they’re God. And, in fact, the Jews accused Jesus of being insane, that insane people claim to be God. There has to be more, they say, even though what He says is true as He says in John 8 because He knows who He is, where He came from, where He’s going, He will give them supporting testimony. In fact, He will draw testimony from one who must be believed. Verse 32, “There is another who testifies of Me.” Who is it? Who is the other who testifies of Me? It is one whom I know and I know that the testimony which He gives about Me is true. Who is this?” Answer, it is the Father, God the Father, the one that they would acknowledge as true. God who cannot lie. God who is truth itself.

So He calls on the testimony of another. But Deuteronomy 17 and 19 says you have to have two or three witnesses. Well the Father has given testimony three ways, through John the Baptist, through the miracles of Jesus, and through the Old Testament. So those become the three ways in which the Father who is truth has given true testimony to Jesus Christ. This is a vital portion of Scripture, and it is an inescapable and devastating judgment on the Jews because they had already affirmed that John the Baptist was a prophet from God, that Jesus did miracles that only God could do and that the Old Testament was written by God. So they had already affirmed that God spoke through John, God worked through Jesus. And God wrote the Old Testament through the writers and the prophets. They are now literally skewered on the horns of a terrible dilemma because they have affirmed the divine source of John the Baptist, the miracles of Jesus, and the Old Testament, but refused to believe the message. They refused to believe what they confess to be sources of divine revelation and divine truth.

Now you will remember from last time, if you were here, that the Father is the agent working in all three of these forms of testimony. In the first one, it is John who is mentioned in verse 33, John the Baptist. But John’s testimony, verse 34 says, is not from man. Well that leaves you only one other option and that is it’s from the Father. And in verse 36, it’s the miracles of Jesus, the works that I do, but the works that He did were works which the Father had given Him to do. So again, the Father is active in the miracles of Jesus. And finally, the Father testifies in verse 37 of Me and verse 39 says, “He does that in the Scriptures which you search.” So all three are means by which the Father gives testimony to the deity of the Son. Yes at the Baptism Jesus said, “Behold, this is My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased.” But nobody heard that. That wasn’t public testimony. And at the transfiguration He said, “This is My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased,” again, but only Peter, James and John were there to hear that. That was not public testimony. The minister of John, public, all Judea, all Jerusalem, were coming to John through the many, many months of His ministry, if not years. Through the three years of Jesus’ miracle ministry, the crowds were coming to Jesus everywhere He went. The evidence was across the land from the top to the bottom. And the Old

Testament Scripture had been available for…for centuries and was available to the people then. So this is testimony that is far reaching, far and wide, extensive testimony from God the Father, to the deity of Jesus Christ. The message of John the Baptist, the miracles, and the Old Testament, here is Messiah, He is the Son of God in whom You believe to have eternal life.

The indicting element of this is the fact that the people had affirmed these means by which God had given testimony. Let's draw down a little bit and remember, however, that in spite of what they affirmed as the divine source of these ministries and these evidences, verse 16 says they were persecuting Jesus. Verse 18 says they were wanting to kill Jesus. And verse 40 says they were unwilling to come to Jesus to have eternal life. But what we have is the rejection that essentially is declared in chapter 1, "He came to His own and His own…what?...received Him not." But let's look at the three categories of testimony.

First of all, a review of the testimony of John the Baptist, the prophet. "You, you Jews, and wherever you see Jews in the gospel of John, He's talking to the leaders, and that's whom He's talking to here because they had confronted Him about violating the Sabbath and He's still talking to them, "You sent people to John, you yourselves went to John, He testified the truth about Me, it was not from man, it was from God, He was a prophet, everybody knew He was a prophet." Everybody knew it. He was the lamp. He was burning, shining. In other words, extensive, powerful, effective, and you were willing to rejoice for a while in His light. You didn't shut Him down, you accepted Him as a prophet, you went yourselves. The range of John's popularity and John's acceptance as a prophet can be seen in the twentieth chapter of Luke. On one of the days Jesus was teaching in Luke 20 in the Temple, and preaching the gospel and the chief priests and scribes and elders, that would be the Jews in John's terminology, the leaders, they confront Jesus and they said, "Tell us, by what authority You're doing these things? Who is the one who gave you this authority?" You can't just walk in our Temple and start teaching, you're not official, you don't have any place here, this isn't your place. Who gave you the authority?

"Jesus answered and said to them, 'I'll ask you a question, you tell me. Was the baptism of John from heaven or from men? John the Baptist. They reasoned among themselves, saying, 'If we say from heaven, He'll say why don't you believe Him? If you say John's ministry is from heaven, then why don't you believe him when He tells you I am the Lamb of God?'"

They didn't want to say that because they were unwilling to believe. Then they said, "If we say it's from men, all the people will stone us to death for they are convinced that John was a prophet." So they didn't give an answer. They by their own lips declare that the whole nation was so in to John the Baptist that if these men had said He wasn't a prophet, they were liable to be stoned to death by a mob. That's how strong the commitment was of the nation Israel to the fact that John was a prophet, that His message was not from man. "He is the prophet from the Father with a message of salvation." That was His message. He was preaching, 'The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world,'

He was preaching repentance."

People probably knew the story. Luke 1, the angel comes and tells Zacharias, an old man who has never had children, his wife, Elizabeth barren. "You're going to have a son, a miracle son and He's going to turn many of the people to righteousness." That's what He's going to do. He's going to have an evangelistic ministry, a ministry of salvation. And then when Zacharias gives his benedictus at the end of chapter 1, he says that you, child, speaking of the child John the Baptist, you're going to be the forerunner of the Messiah to prepare His way, and you're going to prepare the way for the salvation of His people. That's why verse 35 has the comment that John's ministry and mine are about you being saved, saved from judgment, saved from sin.

And when John began his ministry, what did they say? What was the popular word, that Isaiah 40 had been fulfilled. This is the voice of one crying in the wilderness, make ready the path of the Lord. That's even quoted over in Luke chapter 3. So everybody knew John was a prophet.

The leaders even affirmed that and didn't deny that. But it put him in a terrible dilemma because if he was the prophet from God, they should have believed what He said. They were unwilling to believe what He said and so they were in a terrible situation. Why didn't they believe? Because they didn't want to believe. Why didn't they want to believe? Because they loved their religious sin. It wasn't that they loved immorality. Superficially they were very moral. Some people love their immorality, they loved their morality. They thought their morality saved them. They loved their religious sins, their moral sins.

So they affirm the testimony of John the Baptist and it's about Jesus. And it wasn't just the onetime He said, "Behold the Lamb of God," the whole ministry of John, as long as it lasted, pointed to Christ, day after day, after day, after day, after day.

The second way the Father gave testimony, first through the prophet John the Baptist, whom God literally created I the womb of Elizabeth by enabling that couple to get pregnant when they had previously had not and they were very old, God planted the Holy Spirit in the womb in John the Baptist in the womb even when he was still unborn. It was all the work of God. His birth, in a sense, was the work of God. His message was the work of God. They all acknowledged it. It was the Father speaking in John the Baptist.

Secondly, it was the Father speaking in the miracles, verse 36, "The testimony which I have is greater than the testimony of John, greater than words, or works, for the works which the Father, again, has given me to accomplish the very works that I do, testify about Me that the Father has sent Me." They are God's testimony through Me that I have come from God. In the greatest way, God will yet speak as we'll see in verses 37 to 39, but for now, the second way which is greater than the first way, is through the miracles. This is how the Father testifies to me." You remember Nicodemus in chapter 3

says, “We know you’re a teacher sent from God because no one can do the things that you do unless God be with him, and the miracles were everywhere. If you come to the end of the gospel of John, the very last statements of chapter 21, this is what you read. This is the disciple, John referring to Himself, who is testifying to these things, that is to all that He’s written about, the miracles of the Lord, I write these things and we know the testimony is true. Then in verse 25, the last verse of this gospel, “And there are also many other things which Jesus did which if they were written in detail, I suppose that even the world itself would not contain the books that would be written.”

The world, John says, couldn’t contain the books that could be written about the things that Jesus did. This is massive testimony through the miracles of Jesus. And still, verse 40 tells us, they are unwilling to believe.

Listen to John 12:37, “But though He had performed so many signs before them, yet they were not believing in Him.” Listen to John 15:24, “If I had not done among them the works which no one else did, they would not have sin but now they have both seen and hated Me and My Father as well.” If you reject Christ, you hate Christ. If you hate Christ, you hate the Father. This still needs to be proclaimed even today to Jewish people. We are sympathetic with Israel, the nation Israel, we ought to be more than sympathetic, we ought to be compassionate and totally loving and we ought to love them with gospel honesty. But part of the message you have to give to the Jews is you are not in a favored position. You are in a disastrous position because if you reject Jesus Christ whom you know about and reject, the hottest hell is reserved for you. If you hate Him, you hate His Father. You have no relationship to God whatsoever, and those are the words of Jesus, not mine. The Father gives testimony through the Son and if you reject the Son, and hate the Son, you reject and hate the Father.

Listen to John 16:27, “The Father Himself loves you because you loved Me and have believed that I came forth from the Father. The Father loves you because you believe in the Son.” Love and hate, reject the Son, you hate the Son, you hate the Father. Love the Son, you love the Father, the Father loves you.

So the testimony then of the miracles was the Father’s second means of giving testimony to the Son, to the deity of Jesus Christ.

The third one then takes us, chapter 5 again, to verses 37 to 39, and we’ll spend the next few minutes doing the impossible, or making a feeble stab at it. Verses 37 to 39 is one unit, though in some Bibles there are little headings that divide it up. It is one unit. Let me read it to you. It’s a flow of reasoning, or logic. “And the Father who sent Me, He has testified of Me.”

Okay, now we’re coming to the greatest testimony. The first level was great, John the Baptist. Then it was greater, the miracles. Now here’s the greatest. “The Father who has sent Me, He has testified of

Me." This is still the Father's testimony. What's He talking about? What now? What is this form of the Father's testimony? Keep reading.

"You have neither heard His voice at any time or seen His form." You have not had access to this testimony because, verse 38, "You do not have His…what?...His Word abiding in you." So this then is the Father's testimony through the Word…which is not abiding in you. If it was, you wouldn't be in the situation you're in. It's obvious you don't have the Word abiding in You because you don't believe in Him whom He sent. You search the Scriptures, the Word, because you think that in them you have eternal life. It is these that testify about Me."

So if you started in verse 37, take the line, "He has testified of Me," then go to verse 39, referring to Scripture, "It is these that testify about Me." So the means the Father is using here is the Old Testament, the only Bible Jesus ever had, the only Bible the disciples ever had, the only Bible anybody in the New Testament ever had was an Old Testament. And the Father in the Old Testament gives testimony to Jesus Christ.

Now we did a series a couple of years ago now, it's hard to think that way, the time goes so fast, on finding Christ in the Old Testament. Remember that? Did a number of weeks finding Christ in the Old Testament. You would do well to get that, to understand what they should have understood when they read the Old testament. The Father, go back to verse 37, "who sent Me." Literally in the Greek it says, "The Father who sent Me, that one, emphatic, that one has testified of Me."

By the way, as a perfect tense which means it's ongoing, it's sustained. The testimony of John the Baptist was for a season, that's what it says. The miracles of Jesus came to an end. The Word of God is forever. And by the way, the Word of God embodies the record of the words of John the Baptist and the miracles of Jesus, at least some of them. But the ministry of John had a season, the massive sweeping ministry of miracles, including the great portion of them that are unrecorded, had a season. The Scripture is for all seasons, perfect tense. This time the Father who sent Me, that one has testified, perfect tense, in the past with sustained appearance and reality. The greatest witness then is Scripture.

And mark it, and this is a comment by Paul on the Old Testament, "All Scripture is God-breathed," 2 Timothy 3. That's on the Old Testament. The New Testament is being written. Hebrews 1, "God in time past spoke through the prophets in many ways, in many forms," Hebrews 1:1. God spoke in the Old Testament. Over and over in the Old Testament, "The Word of the Lord came…the Word of the Lord came…the Word of the Lord came." The Jews all believed it. They believed John was a prophet. They believed Jesus' miracles had to be by the power of God until they flipped and decided they would attribute them to Satan which Jesus said is stupid because that would be a house divided against itself, and why would Satan cast out Satan? Because much of his ministry was casting out demons, they came to that irrational conclusion that His miracles were Satanic when they knew in

their own minds that that was irrational as a way to justify their unbelief.

Now they have the Old Testament, they affirm it as the Word of God. And even though they possess it, He says, “You have neither heard His voice at any time or seen His form.” That’s just a broad way of saying you, like anybody, you learn through seeing and hearing, right? Those are the two senses by which we learn. You learn through seeing and seeing. Even when you read, you’re hearing the words in your mind. He’s simply saying you don’t appropriate any knowledge of God, none. The two senses by which we perceive are used here as a broad way to say you don’t know God at all. You don’t have any knowledge of God, you have a zeal for God, Romans 10, but not according to knowledge. Romans 3, you don’t know God. You don’t know God. devastating, infuriating condemnation this is, to say to these Jewish leaders, You don’t know God, you don’t have any connection to God. God has testified about Me and it’s obvious that you don’t know Him or you would hear that testimony. You would see Him and you would see Me. But, verse 38, and here’s the reason, You do not have His Word abiding in you. You have it in your hand, you have it in a scroll, you have it in a box at the back of the synagogue, but you don’t have it in you. You don’t understand it.

Look, the world is full of Bibles, would you agree? The world is full of Bibles. It’s not about having a Bible, it’s about having the Word in the Scriptures in you…in you. “If My Word abides in you, then you’re My real disciple. If you continue in My Word, then you’re My real disciple, John 8. It’s an infuriating condemnation of the religiously elite Jews. As far as God is concerned, they’re deaf and blind, they’re all a…they’re a nation of Helen Kellers without a sign language, hopeless gropers, and the world is full of those people. People who have Bibles and don’t know the truth, don’t have the truth, cults, all the false religions, all the false prophets, all the corrupt forms of Christianity. God is inaccessible to you. Why is God inaccessible? Why don’t you know God? Why can’t you discern what God is saying? What He’s doing, even though you have an Old Testament? His Word is not in you. How do you know His Word is not in you? “For you don’t believe Him whom He sent. You search the Scriptures because you think in them you have eternal life and they’re talking about Me. So if you don’t see Me there, then you don’t have the Word in you. It’s that simple.

You don’t believe Him whom He sent, end of verse 38. You hailed John the Baptist as a prophet, but you don’t believe what He said. You affirm the miracles as the work of God, but you don’t believe in the one who did them. You search the Scriptures.

Now if you have an old King James, or maybe a few other translations, they might have it in the Imperative, might make it a command, “Search the Scriptures.” The form in the Greek is the same, the indicative statement of fact, the imperative, a command, it’s the same, so we have to use the context. So how do you know that this is one or the other?

Well it could be a command, Jesus could be saying, “Search the Scriptures,” but that’s not the best interpretation for two reasons. Reason number one would be because this is an indictment. This is

not instruction. He's not telling them to do something. He's describing the fruitlessness of what they do. He's saying you heard John and didn't believe him. You saw Jesus and didn't believe Him. And now He's simply saying you search Scripture and don't believe it. So these are statements literally indicting them on their behaviors.

Secondly, the second verb is the verb think. If he said, "Search the Scriptures," as a command, then the next line makes less sense. It would be better to say, "Search the Scriptures, you search the Scriptures, indicative, because you think, that's indicative clearly. So because the second verb is indicative, describing a behavior, it's more likely that the first verb is indicative, describing behavior.

By the way, search is a strong word…very strong word. Used in extra biblical literature in ancient times of a lion prowling after its prey, stalking its prey, used even of wild dogs that are tracking game. The word came to mean track and then it came to mean trace, and then it came to mean investigate. So he's saying to them, you trace the Scriptures, you investigate the Scriptures.

Look, I don't have to go over that again. They were relentless, fastidious in the handling of the Old Testament scrolls. They gave it great honor. When they copied it, sometimes they would write one letter and throw away the pen and get another pen for the next letter. They labored over the Scripture in their own characteristic, rabbinical way. But they had a problem. They were void of the Holy Spirit, right? They were natural men who understand not the things of God. They had terribly defective principles of interpretation. One of the interesting studies you do in seminary is to study rabbinical hermeneutics, which is the science of interpretation. And you see what they used to interpret the Scripture was just crazy and bizarre. They came up with unbelievable and unacceptable interpretations because they were in to deduction, rather than induction, rather than let the text speak, they imposed on the text their own ideas. They were full of allegory and mystical things and hidden meanings. Rabbinical hermeneutics is a fascinating study. They could obscure anything in the Bible. They were very deft at doing that. Occasionally ancient rabbinical interpretation does provide some true interpretation, but much of it is fanciful and even bizarre and strange and that would be the same with even modern rabbis handling the Old Testament.

So you're there, you're tracking, you're searching it out, you're investigating it in your bizarre and unfortunately blind and superficial way. By the way, that wasn't necessary, they could have understood it because Jesus says, as I pointed out, many times in the New Testament, "Have you not read? Have you not read? Have you not read?" The assumption is if you had read it, it's clear enough you would have understood it. Simeon and Anna understood it. Who were they? Just a couple of saints at the Temple when Jesus came to be circumcised.

Some fishermen in Galilee understood it. Samaritan outcasts understood it. They could have understood it. They affirmed the Old Testament was the Word of God, and then obscured its meaning by their manipulations because they were unwilling to believe the truth. So he says, "You possess the

Scriptures, you search the Scriptures, you acknowledge them as the revelation of God. They're all about Me. And you reject Me. That's the flow of thought.

Drop down to verse 45 for a minute, and we'll look at this in two weeks. Next week I'll be in the Dominican Republic but a week later I'll be back. Verse 45, "Do not think that I will accuse you before the Father, the one who accuses you is Moses in whom you have set your hope. For if you believe Moses, you would have believed Me, for he wrote about Me. If you do not believe His writings, how will you believe My words?"

If you believed Moses, you'd believe in Me? Sure. You say, "How is that possible? How is that possible? Well the whole Old Testament is about Christ and it starts with Moses. It starts with Moses.

In Luke, just remind you of what we learned in our series on finding Christ in the Old Testament, Luke 16:29, Jesus tells a story, He makes up this story about a rich man who dies and a beggar who dies and in the story He has Abraham say because the rich man is in hell, he's in torment, and he says to Abraham in the story, he says, "Send somebody to warn my brothers so they don't come here." And our Lord has Abraham say in Luke 16:29, "They have Moses and the prophets, let them hear them."

Do you understand that the Jews have that? The Jews that occupy the land of Israel today, they have Moses and the prophets. And if they listen to Moses and the prophets, they'd all come to Christ. Let them hear them. He said, "No, no, no, Father Abraham, but if someone goes to them from the dead, oh that will do it, then they'll repent. But He said, if they don't listen to Moses and the prophets, they won't be persuaded even if someone rose from the dead." Guess what? Someone did rise from the dead, and they lied about it and created a false explanation.

In the twenty-fourth chapter, that famous concluding chapter of Luke, in verse 25, Jesus meets some of His disciples on the road to Emmaus, and they're moaning about the fact that they thought Jesus was the Messiah, and now He's dead, and they don't understand. So Jesus speaks to them in Luke 24:25, "O foolish men, slow of heart, to believe in all the prophets have spoken." Your problem is, you don't believe your Bible. "Was it not necessary for the Christ to suffer these things and to enter in to His glory? Then beginning with Moses with all the prophets, the Old Testament, He explained to them the things concerning Himself in all the Scriptures." And then that night with His disciples, verse 44, He said to the disciples in the Upper Room, "These are My words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things which are written about Me in the Law of Moses and the prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled." Then He opened their minds to understand the Scriptures, and He said to them, "Thus it is written that the Christ would suffer and rise again from the dead the third day, and that repentance for forgiveness of sins would be proclaimed in His name to all the nations beginning from Jerusalem."

All that in the Old Testament? Yes, all that in the Old Testament. “Have you not read? Have you not read?” You say, “What do you mean? What about Him is in the Old Testament?”

Well there are details about His birth, the virgin will conceive and bear a child, Isaiah. There are details about the place of His birth, Micah, He’ll be born in Bethlehem. There are all kinds of details about His crucifixion as described in Psalm 22, described in further detail in Isaiah 53. Much is said about Him, His betrayer is identified as a familiar friend. There are all kinds of details about Christ in His death and in His resurrection. Psalm 16 points to His resurrection. It’s all there. You could go on and on with all of that, as you well know.

But just in a general sense, the need for the Messiah to suffer and rise again is based on this. Clearly the Old Testament is full of passages about His reigning, about His throne, He is a King, He’s the anointed one, going to take His throne, He’s going to rule and reign and bring about the fulfillment of all the promises to David in the Davidic Covenant, and all the promises to Abraham in the Abrahamic Covenant…great, glorious Kingdom is coming and that Kingdom is described in detail by the prophets.

But He’s not just going to take His Kingdom. Something else has to come. And if you follow the flow in the book of Genesis, this is how it starts, God creates, everything’s good, chapters 1 and 2. Chapter 3, man sins. In the day that man sins, he dies. The death principle takes over the human race. And since then everybody is going to die. That’s clear because in chapter 5 you have a genealogy of everybody who lived, and it says at the end of each name, “And he died…and he died…and he died…and he died…and he died…and he died and it’s all there just for the “and he died” part.

So if you’re going to memorize the genealogy, just memorize that part. You can do it really quick. The names don’t matter, they all end up the same thing. And just to show you how far-reaching death is, go a couple more chapters, go to 6, 7 and 8 and you find the whole world dies. They’re drowned and there are only eight left. Now you know there’s a problem and it is a massive problem with far-reaching consequences. But also you’re going to read in Genesis 6 that Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord. Man is sinful, he’s headed for death, he needs grace. Noah found grace, that’s why he survived. God is a God of grace, Exodus 22:27, Moses writes, when He calls out to me the words of God, “I will hear Him for I am gracious.” And you come to Exodus 33, “I’m compassionate, I’m merciful, I’m gracious.” Exodus 34, “I’m compassionate, I’m merciful, I’m gracious.” Not only that, Exodus 34, “I offer forgiveness for sins and forgiveness for iniquities. Wow! Then the Law. But what about the Law? The Law crushes me, kills me, destroys me, I can’t keep the Law. It slays me, to borrow the words of Paul. So I can’t be righteous. My righteousness is filthy rags. My heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked. How can I be righteous before God?

The biggest dilemma, THE dilemma of humanity, the dilemma of redemption is given in Exodus 34:6 and 7, listen to this. The Lord speaking, says, “I am the Lord, the Lord God compassionate and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in loving kindness and truth, who keeps loving kindness for thousands who forgives iniquity, transgression and sin…then this…yet He will by no means leave the guilty unpunished.” What? That is THE redemptive dilemma.

How can God be merciful, gracious, compassionate, forgiving and punish every sin? I can’t earn my salvation, they knew that, because the Law killed them. The Law was to reveal the sinfulness of sin. How do they tap in to God’s grace? How do they get this forgiveness? And how can God forgive and be gracious and still punish every sin? How does God forgive? We find that in Genesis 15:6, “Abraham believed God and God credited it to him as righteousness.”

Wow, he didn’t have to be righteous, all he had to do was believe and God would grant him righteousness. That’s justification, that’s imputation, and it’s in Genesis 15. But how can God do that? Because if God gives a man who doesn’t deserve it righteousness, that’s grace, but what about the man’s sin? What about his sin? How does God punish the sin?

Genesis 3, Adam and Eve are aware of their sin, what does God do? Kills an innocent animal, takes the skin, covers them and we have an illustration that a substitute is going to bear the judgment in order to provide covering. Exodus 12, we learn more. It’s a Passover lamb that pictures the innocent dying in the place of the guilty. You come into the book of Leviticus and immediately in the opening chapter of Leviticus, you have all these sacrifices for sin that are substitutionary in their character. But they have to be repeated and repeated and repeated and repeated because none of them is ever enough. But they’re pointing to one who will be. And you finally meet the one who will be when you get to Isaiah 53 and guess what? He is the servant of Jehovah, a Messianic title, and He will be wounded for our transgressions and bruised for our iniquities. And in that same chapter, after He’s been crushed and killed in our place, He rises from the dead in that same chapter, Isaiah 53.

All of that is in the Old Testament, all of it. He rises and takes His throne in Isaiah 53 and His soul is satisfied. That’s why Galatians 3, Paul says, “The Old Testament was intended to lead us to Christ to be our school master to lead us to Christ. So if the Jews had been true believers in the Father, they would have accepted Christ, the Son on the basis of the testimony of John the Baptist who they declared to be a prophet. They would have accepted Jesus Christ on the basis of the miracles that He did, giving evidence that He was who God said He was. And they would have accepted Jesus Christ because He is the subject of the Old Testament. But they were unwilling. Verse 40, “They were unwilling to come and have life.” Why? Because they loved their sin. Men love darkness rather than light because their deeds are evil.

I want to close by reading 1 John 5. If I seem like I was talking fast, I was, trying to cover a lot. But I want you to just listen to this. Now with all that you’ve heard, just listen to this, 1 John 5:9, same

writer, John, the language is the same, vocabulary's the same, thoughts are the same, truths the same, this is so inimitable for John. Let's start in verse 9, 1 John 5. Listen to it personally, would you? It's talking about you. "If we received the testimony of men, the testimony of God is greater." Do you ever receive the testimony of men on things? Sure. The Jews did when they had two or three witnesses. The testimony of God is greater, are you willing to receive that? "For the testimony of God is this, that He has testified concerning His Son. The one who believes in the Son of God has the testimony in himself. The one who does not believe God has made Him a liar." That would be blasphemy because he has not believed in the testimony that God has given concerning His Son and the testimony is this, that God has given us eternal life and this life is in His Son. He who has the Son has the life, he who does not have the Son of God does not have the life." Unmistakable, right? Unmistakable.

The final unforgiveable crime is not to believe what God said about His Son and you have just called God a liar. You are a blasphemer who hates the Son and the Father. Don't kid yourself that you're anything other than that. The final decision that you make concerning Jesus Christ is whether or not you will believe what the Father says about Him, revealed in Scripture. That determines your destiny. Let's pray.

Father, we again come to You this morning at the end of such a wonderful and rich experience of fellowship and worship. We feel that we have left this world for a little while and we have climbed the hill and had the vision of Your glory and Your Son. We almost have to come back down to the realities of this life, but may we be transformed and may we like Moses find the glory still on our face when we descend and may it be seen on us as others come into our lives. May the glory of Christ radiate from us as we have gazed at His glory. May we reflect that glory. Use us to that end, we pray with thanksgiving.

Father, now we ask that You would…that You would reveal yourself to us again through Your Word this morning that we would not just see the page and the facts, the great theology is one thing, but that we would really see Your glory. And the difference would be that when we see the facts, we're interested and we walk away and the subject changes. But if we see Your glory, the awe remains. So help us to bask in the awesome reality of who Christ is and may it demonstrate itself to us in that primary way of obedience because if we really love You, we keep Your commandments. If we really love You, we live holy lives, we make holy relationships and alliances and would have holy purposes and holy plans and holy ambitions, holy desires, holy longings. That's the evidence that we have been captured by Your awesome person and may You sustain that in us by Your Holy Spirit and do a work in every heart, we pray in the name of Christ.

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