



Believe

JOHN

MESSAGE

STUDY GUIDE

GROUP MATERIAL

SONGS

Examining the text & our hearts:

Bible Reading: John 5:31-47

John 5:31-47

31“If I testify about myself, my testimony is not true.**32**There is another who testifies about me, and I know that the testimony he gives about me is true.**33**You sent messengers to John, and he testified to the truth.**34**I don’t receive human testimony, but I say these things so that you may be saved.**35**John was a burning and shining lamp, and you were willing to rejoice for a while in his light.**36**“But I have a greater testimony than John’s because of the works that the Father has given me to accomplish. These very works I am doing testify about me that the Father has sent me.**37** The Father who sent me has himself testified about me. You have not heard his voice at any time, and you haven’t seen his form.**38****You don’t have his word residing in you, because you don’t believe the one he sent.****39****You pore over the Scriptures because you think you have eternal life in them, and yet they testify about me.****40****But you are not willing to come to me so that you may have life....****45**Do not think that I will accuse you to the Father. Your accuser is Moses, on whom you have set your hope.**46****For if you believed Moses, you would believe me, because he wrote about me.****47**But if you don’t believe what he wrote, how will you believe my words?”

I. The Witnesses that point to Jesus

A. God, the Father – vv. 32, 37

- The Father ... has himself borne witness?refers to the whole of the Father’s witness, including all of Jesus’ miracles and teaching as directed by the Father ([3:2](#); [5:19–20](#)) and all of God’s witness in Scripture (cf. [vv. 45–47](#); [Luke 24:27, 44](#); [Acts 13:27](#); [1 John 5:9](#)).ESV Study Bible

B. John the Baptist – vv. 33-35

- Jesus himself did not depend on John the Baptist's witness to establish who he was in his own mind. Jesus did not need a human testimony since the Father testifies in his favor ([v. 32](#); cf. [1 John 5:9](#)). Jesus mentions John the Baptist's witness for the sake of his hearers. NIV Zondervan Study Bible

C. The works that Jesus did – v. 36

- [The works] include all of Jesus' ministry, including his "signs" and climactic work of redemption accomplished in the cross and resurrection (cf. [9:3-4](#); [10:25,37-38](#); [14:11](#); [17:4](#)). Everything Jesus does simultaneously attests to who he is and who the Father is since all that Jesus does is nothing more and nothing less than what the Father gives him to do ([vv. 19-30](#)). NIV Zondervan Study Bible

D. The scriptures – v. 39

- "John's...extraordinary claim [is] that *all of Israel's Scripture actually bears witness to Jesus*: 'If you believed Moses, you would believe me, for he wrote about me' (Jn. 5:46)...John understands the OT as a vast matrix of symbols prefiguring Jesus." [Richard B. Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Gospels*, pp. 343-5]
- Jesus "insisted that the Scriptures testify to him, John 5:39...Jesus said that if the [Jewish] leaders believed the writings of Moses, they would believe him too 'for he wrote of me' (Jn. 5:46). These claims of Jesus are general, but also strikingly clear. He taught that the OT anticipated him. He said the biblical authors wrote about him. Contrast this claim with the words of Udo Schnelle, who said, '*The OT is silent about Jesus Christ.*' (U. Schnelle, *Theology of the NT*, p. 52) According to Richard Hays, Schnell's words 'directly contradict the explicit testimony of *the NT writers* themselves. They emphatically *do not think the OT is silent about Jesus Christ.*' (Richard B. Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Gospels*, p.)
- "The main error...is to identify truth with the actual words of Scripture...Jesus [tells] the Jews 'Why don't you understand what I'm saying? It's because you cannot accept my teaching [Gk. my words]' (Jn. 8:43) 'It is because you cannot bear to hear my Word (Logos).' In order to understand the words of Scripture we have to hear the Logos, Christ himself. The words of Scripture lead us beyond themselves to the Eternal Word." [Jock Stein, Howard Taylor, *In Christ All Things Hold Together*, p. 31]

II. Seeing Jesus in Scripture

A. The purpose of scripture is to point us to Jesus

- "We should read the Scriptures Christ-o-centrally...Jesus clearly saw himself as the fulfillment of the OT writings... Several biblical texts...seem to demonstrate this idea...Jn. 5:39, 46...Jesus said that the Scriptures were all about him!" [Tony Merida, *Christ-Centered Expositor*, p.]
- The study of Scripture does not by itself impart life. The Scriptures rather bear witness to the One who gives life, namely, Jesus (cf. [vv. 46-47](#)). Consequently, the study of the Bible ought to result in genuine faith in Jesus, followed by obedient action and transformed lives, not merely acquisition of Bible knowledge... People who (like Jesus' Jewish opponents) read the OT without seeing that it all points to Jesus fail to understand its message. ESV Study Bible
- Regarding "Jesus' assertion in Jn. 5:39 that the Scripture testifies to him...D. A. Carson rightly contends that...Scripture is presented as providing 'a *comprehensive [interpretational] key*:'

By predictive prophecy, by type, by revelatory event & by anticipatory statute, 'what we call the OT is understood to *point to Christ*, his ministry, his teaching, his death & resurrection'." [A. Kostenberger, "John," in Beale & Carson (eds.) *Commentary on the NT Use of the OT*, p. 443]

B. The proper way to read scripture

- Jesus fulfills the OT Scriptures ([Matt 5:17-18](#); [11:13](#); [Luke 24:25-27,45](#); [Heb 1:1-2](#)), so by not believing in Jesus, the Scripture experts show that they have not rightly understood and obeyed the Scriptures. There is nothing intrinsically life-giving about studying the Scriptures if one fails to discern their content and purpose. Jesus-not Scripture itself imparts life. NIV Zondervan Study Bible
- "Figural interpretation establishes a connection between two events or persons in such a way that the first signifies not only itself but also the second, while the second involves or fulfills the first' (Auerbach). *Figural reading...is always a matter of 'reading backwards'*." [R. B. Hays, *Reading with the Grain of Scripture*, p.]

C. Seeing Jesus in Scripture requires belief

1. The Jewish leaders didn't see because they didn't believe – 5:38

- "The Bible consistently prescribes faith as a precondition for experiencing Scripture's authority. Jesus chastises the Emmaus disciples for not meeting that condition 'How foolish and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken!' (Lk. 24:25). He goes on to declare the truth; they believe him...It's their believing hearing that caused their hearts to burn within them...Similarly, in his earthly ministry Jesus points to belief in the OT Scriptures as the key to receiving the benefits of their spiritual power—namely, eternal life (Jn. 5:39-40, 46-47)." [William J. Larkin, *Culture and Biblical Hermeneutics*, pp. 281-2]

2. The history of Israel is a history of unbelief

- "Jesus has performed signs and wonders like Moses before him [4:48], but they are met with stubborn unbelief [from 'the Jews' (12:37-40)]. However, from John's perspective, this is only to be expected because the entire story of Israel bears witness to the disinclination of God's people to accept God's word. The experience of Moses and the prophets foreshadows that of Jesus." [Paul Miller, "They saw his Glory," in Stanley E. Porter (ed.) *Hearing the OT in the NT*, p. 139]

III. Examples of Jesus in Scripture

A. In definite prophecies

1. The seed of the woman – Gen. 3:15
2. A prophet like Moses will be raised up – Deut. 18:15
3. A virgin will conceive and bear a son, Immanuel – Isa. 7:14

B. In NT fulfillment of OT

1. The Son of Man lifted up as the serpent in the wilderness was lifted up – John 3:14-15 Num. 21:8-9
2. The unbelief of people – John 12:36-39; Isa. 53:1; 6:10
3. The world hating Jesus – John 15:25; Psa. 69:4
4. Judas' betrayal – John 13:18; 17:12; Psa. 41:9
5. Casting lot for his clothing – John 19:24; Psa. 22:18
6. No bone broken – John 19:36; Exo. 12:46

C. In typology

- Recognizing typology is one way of recognizing that Moses—and the Biblical authors who followed him—wrote about Jesus.” [Mitchell L. Chase, 40 Questions About Typology, p. 44]
 1. Abraham – in him all nations would be blessed – Gen. 12:3
 2. The offering of Isaac – a type of Christ as the only son of God being offered – Gen. 22:1-2
 3. The Passover lamb – Exo. 12; John 1:29, 36
... *“Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!”*
 4. Manna – bread from heaven Exo. 16; John 6:35 (John 6 – feeding the 5000)>
 - “I am the bread of life,” Jesus told them. “No one who comes to me will ever be hungry, and no one who believes in me will ever be thirsty again.
 - “We would dearly love...to have a specimen of the way in which John understood the OT witness to Christ [John 5:39]; fortunately...[John] *has provided precisely such an example in...[Jn.]?6*. The discourse [on the Bread of Life (6:22-59)] is not merely a development of the implications of the miracle of feeding [the 5,000]...on the contrary...[it] is fundamentally *an exposition of an OT text—the story of the Manna in the Wilderness* in Ex. 16.’ (Barnabas Lindars, Gospel, pp. 233-4). [This] provides a...satisfying solution to the puzzle of the present position of John 6.” [John Ashton, *John*, pp. 18-19]
 - ?In John 5:30-47 “Jesus refers to [John] the Baptist, his own works, the Father, & the Scriptures as his witnesses. In [John] chapter 6, *examples are given of these witnessing functions: Jesus’ works* are exemplified by the feeding of the 5,000; God the Father, sealed & authorized the Son of Man; the *OT quotation & exposition* of bread from heaven bore witness to him as the bread of life that came down from heaven.” [Peder Borgen, *John*, p. 21]?
 - John says scripture (for them OT) points to Jesus. Next chapter gives us an example – feeding the 5000. Elisha fed 100 men (2 King. 4:42-44)
 5. Jonah – Luke 11:30
 - *For just as Jonah became a sign to the people of Nineveh, so also the Son of Man will be to this generation.*

D. In general OT figures

1. Moses wrote about Jesus

- For he [Moses] wrote of me?[5:46] applies not only to specific predictions like [Deut. 18:15](#)?but also to all the ways in which the history of salvation in these writings pointed to Christ (e.g., [?Luke 24:27, 44](#)?[?John 1:45; 3:14; 8:56](#)?[?Acts 26:22; 28:23](#)?[?1 Cor. 10:4](#)?[?Heb. 11:23–26](#)?[?1 Pet. 1:10–12](#)?[?Jude 5](#)?ESV Study Bible

2. The Temple

- In John’s narrative, the temple becomes a figural sign for Jesus’ body [Jn. 2:21]. Consequently, Jesus becomes, in effect, the temple...Jesus’ *body*?is now the place where God dwells, the place where atonement for sins occurs, the place where the division between God & humanity is overcome...Jesus is not only he temple—the place where we meet God—but also the God who meets us & rescues us by gathering us into union with him” [Richard B. Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Gospels*, pp. 343-5]

3. Joseph

- Sold into slavery and betrayed
- Eventually second in command in Israel
- Savior of God’s people
- Should not be read in a moralistic way
 - “Trust God and he will get you through”

4. David

- David defeating Goliath
- Representing Israel, defeating Satan for us
- David is not our model but an example of Christ fighting for us

IV. Eternal life is found only in Jesus Christ

A. Knowledge and study of scripture are the means not the end

- “Christianity is Christ-centered, not book-centered; if it appears book-centered, it is because it is through the words of Scripture that the believer encounters and feeds upon Jesus Christ. Scripture is a means not an end, a channel, rather than what is channeled.” [Alister McGrath, quoted in Peter Lewis, *Message of the Living God*, pp. 19-20]

B. “Only way to have our heart changed is to see Jesus” Tim Keller, *The OT is about Jesus*, YouTube

C. Life comes only through a personal relationship with Jesus

D. Where are you spending your time?

Resources:

- YouTube: The OT is all about Jesus: by Tim Keller: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4f9znrGxoAM>
- YouTube: Discovering the Gospel in Every Book of the Bible with Tim Keller
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Jt09ZL1F1lo&list=PLqdAeLCMehGE0vhoqCwEtS6BBqg4UJydK>