



LET'S BEGIN HERE

The fifth chapter of John provides us with three scenes. First, a miracle where a man who was paralyzed for nearly 40 years was instantly healed by Jesus. Second, a series of claims where Jesus testified that He is God's Son and equal with God the Father. Third, we read a defense of Christ's deity where five distinct witnesses each verified these claims as truth. In this lesson, we will study the testimonies of the key witnesses and come to our own verdict.



YOUR TURN IN THE SCRIPTURES

Before studying a passage of Scripture, it's helpful to read the entire chapter in which it resides. As you read John 5, make mental notes about what begins to emerge as an overarching theme—for instance, circle or underline key words or phrases that offer clues, or simply make notes in the margin about what stands out to you. Fill in the blanks below with your results.

Theme of John 5:

Major character(s):

Key word(s):

Other observations:

Key verse(s):

Quotable

*We will be jurors in
the jury box today,
as we listen in on
the testimony of
credible witnesses
for the deity
of Jesus.*

— Charles R. Swindoll





Observation: Zooming in on Details

Now that you've observed John 5 with a wide-angle lens, try to zoom in to see how verses 31–47 fit into the whole. Read John 5:31–47 looking for words or ideas that are emphasized. In this passage, we have the continuation of a speech given by Jesus but with a different emphasis. Let's try to discover the reason for the change in focus.

In John 5:31, what reason did Jesus give for providing witnesses to His identity?

Read the passage again carefully. See if you can identify all the witnesses Jesus mentioned. Write them below along with the corresponding verses for each.

What single word or idea is emphasized in this section?

Perhaps by now you're starting to grasp John's reason for including Jesus' long speech. Jesus presented five individual witnesses who each testify to His identity as God's Son. Let's take a closer look at each and try to discover their importance.



Interpretation: Understanding the Impact of the Witnesses

Jesus deliberately mentioned these five witnesses to His identity as God's Son and meant to deliver one powerful truth. Yet in each case, there are interpretive clues that bring us to a point of decision. Based on credible witnesses, what Jesus claimed is true; therefore, it must be believed. Let's examine each witness carefully and see how collectively they provide one powerful truth: Jesus is God.



Witness #1: God the Father (John 5:32, 36–38)

In his commentary on the gospel of John, Chuck Swindoll makes this important interpretive observation about verse 32:

John, translating the Aramaic words of Jesus, could have chosen either of two Greek words for “another,” *allos* [243] or *heteros* [2087]. The two words are basically synonymous with a slight nuance. Whereas *heteros* means “another of a different sort,” *allos* means “another of the same sort.” This “another” is, of course, God the Father (5:36–37).¹

Why is the word Jesus used, which is translated “someone else,” important to understanding His meaning?

According to Jesus, how did the Father testify that Jesus is His Son (John 5:36–37)?

How did Jesus view the attitude of the Pharisees toward God the Father (5:37–38)?

Witness #2: John the Forerunner (John 5:33–35)

Next, Jesus called John the Baptist to the witness stand. In a sentence or two, how would you summarize John the Baptist’s testimony about Jesus?



Initially, the Jewish leaders apparently looked favorably upon John’s ministry (John 5:35). Do you think it was because they believed his message? Why, or why not?

Witness #3: Jesus’ Own Works (John 5:36)

The defense moved from verbal evidence to visual evidence. What did Jesus offer as greater evidence of His deity than the witness of John the Baptist?

What examples of His works could you list based on what John the gospel writer highlighted in the first five chapters?

Witness #4: The Scriptures (John 5:39–44)

What witness did Jesus refer to in these two verses?

What did Jesus mean by “the Scriptures”?



How did Jesus describe the Pharisees' attitude toward this witness of His deity (John 5:40)?

In what way would honoring Christ as God be honoring the Scriptures (5:41–44)?

Witness #5: Moses (John 5:45–47)

Jesus seemed to save the most compelling witness for last, regarding His Jewish jury. What is the significance of Moses' testimony, according to Jesus (John 5:45–46)?

What connection did Jesus make between the Pharisees' willingness to believe the writings of Moses and their rejection of Him?

Why is this significant (5:47)?





Correlation: How Does It Relate?

These hardcore religious elites could not see Jesus as the Messiah because God's Word had not yet penetrated their hearts. Moreover, God's Son had not become the object of their faith or their hearts' devotion. Yet the Old Testament Scriptures echoed through the ages with the news of the coming Messiah (Luke 24:27, 44; Acts 8:30–35). Read the correlating passages below and write a sentence about how each relates to Jesus' words in John 5:45–47.

Deuteronomy 18:15, 19

Luke 13:34–35

Acts 3:18–23



Application: How Will You Respond?

Application always considers our response to truth revealed in the Scriptures. In this passage from John 5, compelling truths are revealed by the testimony of five very credible witnesses. Yet the Bible was not given to us simply as a legal dossier to bring about an intellectual verdict. Rather, God has revealed Himself to us in the person of His Son to draw us to Him (John 12:32).

In what ways has this study of five witnesses of Jesus' deity drawn you closer to Him?



How might you make certain that your study of the Scriptures not remain a mere intellectual exercise but instead a time of worship that opens the doors of your heart to a deeper relationship with Jesus?

If you were brought to trial and accused of being a devoted follower of Jesus, what evidence would exist to prove it? Who would witness your devotion to Him?



A FINAL PRAYER

Father, I desire my life to be a living testimony to the power and presence of Jesus Christ, Your Son. Continue the work You started in me to make me more and more like Him. For the praise and glory of Your name, I pray, amen.

ENDNOTE

1. Charles R. Swindoll, *Swindoll's Living Insights New Testament Commentary: Insights on John* (Carol Stream, Ill.: Tyndale House, 2014), 128–29.



BEHOLDING CHRIST . . . THE SON OF GOD

Witnesses for the Defense

John 5:31–47

SEARCHING
THE
SCRIPTURES

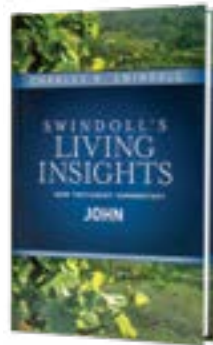
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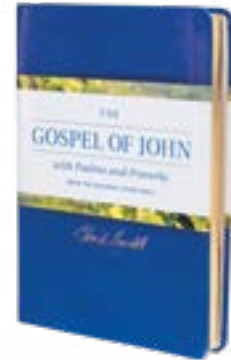
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For the 2018 broadcast, this *Searching the Scriptures* study was developed by Mark Tobey in collaboration with Bryce Klabunde, executive vice president of *Searching the Scriptures* Ministries, based upon the original outlines, charts, and sermon transcripts of Charles R. Swindoll's messages.



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8