

And ye will not come to me, that ye might have life. John 5:40.

We have looked in detail at the unbelief in Christ of the Jewish leaders. We need not stop there and dwell on some sort of antisemitic diatribe. The fact of the matter was that Jesus' ministry at this point was primarily to "His own" and thus the focus seems to be on the Jews. But we can apply these principles to man in general. We see that the active practice of rejecting the call of the Gospel is universally the sinful condition of all men. The tragic fact is that His first evangelistic ministry portends what all evangelists would see:

He came unto his own, and his own received him not. John 1:11.

This is a general disposition of man's combative role regarding the call of the Gospel. By "combative" I mean to say that man is not just neutral regarding Jesus Christ - he is openly hostile toward the Christ of the scriptures. Man can only become non-combative toward a pop-christ - one that he has created in his own mind that fits his convenient thinking.

So when Jesus accused the Jews of not coming to Him for eternal life, it can be applied to all of mankind. Before the soil of the sinful heart can be receptive to the Lord, it must be "plowed, harrowed and nourished" by the convicting - convincing ministry of the Holy Spirit.

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So in this final section of chapter 5 we come to the final statement in this "court of judgement" against unbelief where Jesus brings four witnesses in His behalf and makes final a convicting closing statement before God and man against all unbelief. Let's take a look at this closing case in the court of God against unbelievers.

The Witness of John, the Baptizer.

There is another that beareth witness of me; and I know that the witness which he witnesseth of me is true. [33] Ye sent unto John, and he bare witness unto the truth. [34] But I receive not testimony from man: but these things I say, that ye might be saved. [35] He was a burning and a shining light: and ye were willing for a season to rejoice in his light. John 5:32 - 35.

Just prior to John's witness of Jesus Christ, John was involved in an extensive revival among the Jews. This ministry was predicted by Malachi and alluded to by the

¹ Matthew 13:1 - 15.

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angel of the Lord when John's birth was announced to his father.² This wonderful ministry had gained the attention of the Jewish leaders to the point that they had wondered if John might have been the fulfillment of prophesy - particularly of the promised coming Elijah or maybe even the Christ. John had then pointed them to Jesus Christ. This was in the peak of John's acceptance as a man of God and should have given great weight to his witness concerning Jesus Christ. Note in verse 35 the validity that Jesus gave to John's witness. John was a burning and shining *lamp*. I say lamp because that is the import from the original. Light, *phos*, is reserved for Jesus, Himself. Lamp, *luchnos*, is ascribed to John. The dual action burning and shining should not be overlooked either. It is one thing to light a lamp in ones home for private use but this lamp was burning and brightly *shining* for all to see, in public.

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The articular application points to the exclusivity of John's witness. After over 400 years, the Jews had a true prophet who was pointing them to the Christ. No small matter! They should have rejoiced in this wonderful return to God's favor - but, tragically, they did not. **Thus we have the first count in the indictment against unbelief.**

Jesus gives further insight into the unbelievers responsibility in that they had initially rejoiced in John's prophetic ministry - perhaps even recognizing that, at last, God had sent them a prophet. But their rejoicing soon gave way to cold, suppressive, rationalism and a defensive stance regarding their "bastard son," the sayings of the fathers - a collection of interpretations of the Law that was supposed to show the Jew how to avoid transgressing the Law. But bask in the light of John's prophetic ministry they did and for a season the Holy Spirit did plow the fields of their hearts - **yet another count in their indictment of unbelief.** Their active rejection of Jesus finished that and whatever was given to them in the form of light from John's ministry was to be taken away - they would be abandoned in their unbelief to be judged by the Judge - Jesus Christ. We see a glimpse of this horrible judgment here in this dialogue.

The Works of Christ.

But I have greater witness than that of John: for the works which the Father hath given me to finish, the same works that I do, bear witness of me, that the Father hath sent me. John 5:36.

The witness of John should have been enough - indeed it was for some. Jesus had already called several to Himself. Indeed, I find Nathanael's call to be most interesting - the openness and intelligent application of the facts in the dialogue between Jesus and Nathanael was quite refreshing. The way he sifted through the popular thought of the

² Mal. 4:5, 6; Luke 1:1 - 16.

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day and applied scripture to Jesus Christ should have been the model for all Jews to receive Jesus Christ as Savior. There was a lot going on during John's revival and Jesus emergence on the scene as the Lamb of God. Yet the acceptance of Jesus was ultimately rejected by the majority of the unbelievers there.

Jesus brings on this court-like scene another witness. His works. The Jews had placed great weight on "signs" as a way to verify spiritual truth and here was Jesus - not only performing the miracles but His works were also to include the miracle of the New Birth - particularly that of Nicodemus and the Samaritan woman and her townspeople in Sychar. Many were coming to Christ. Eventually, His disciples were baptizing more than John so that the revival ministry of John was to be built upon and, indeed, eclipsed in magnitude by an ongoing revival ministry of Jesus Himself. Let's take the time to read of Jesus' ministry. John the Baptizer had been imprisoned and was looking for assurance in his depth of despair:

When the men came to Jesus, they said, "John the Baptist sent us to you to ask, 'Are you the one who was to come, or should we expect someone else?' " [21] At that very time Jesus cured many who had diseases, sicknesses and evil spirits, and gave sight to many who were blind. [22] So he replied to the messengers, "Go back and report to John what you have seen and heard: The blind receive sight, the lame walk, those who have leprosy are cured, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the good news is preached to the poor. Luke 7:20:22.

The poor here were those who were destitute of any hope - not necessarily the financially challenged, by the way. So these "works" were the whole ministry of Jesus. They should have witnessed of His authenticity but in the cold, hard hearts of the unbelievers *nothing* would convince them that Jesus was the Christ. It amazes me that the changed lives of the believers who had come to Christ, and for that matter, had become regenerated under John's ministry had not made a greater impression on the unbelieving Jewish leaders. Part of Malachi's prophesy was that the endemic family problems of the day were being turned around. Marriages were being saved, children's and fathers's hearts were being turned toward each other and yet these works of this dual ministry, particularly Christ's ministry was completely over the heads of these unbelievers. [Here is another indictment against their unbelief.](#)

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The Witness of the Father.

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. [38] And ye have not his word abiding in you: for whom he hath sent, him ye believe not. John 5:37, 38.

We have already noted the tradition of the “bath qal” of the religious leaders of the day - while the basic concept of the bath qal is erroneous if not at least flawed, here is a certain notable “sign” that Jesus was, indeed, the Son of God for at His baptism the Father spoke in an audible voice that Jesus was His son and that He was very pleased with him.³ Indeed, the Psalm makes no small reference to the Son:

Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion. [7] I will declare the decree: the LORD hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee. [8] Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession. Psalm 2:6 - 8.

And again:

Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in him. Psalm 2:12.

Surely, this passage should have come to mind during the dialogue - apparently not, although I believe some would have made the connection and quietly believed in the Lord - but that’s my thought on the matter. Later on during the transfiguration on the mount the Father would, again testify regarding Jesus, but that was not a public testimony but one nonetheless. [The counts of unbelief in the indictment goes on.](#)

The Witness of the Scriptures.

Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me. John 5:39.

The Jews, of all people, should have seen in the scriptures Messianic prophesy. A few come to mind: Isaiah 53 especially but let’s not forget John’s reference in Isaiah 40. The whole chapter speaks of comfort of Israel - of the Lord who will not abandon His people and would lead them as a Shepherd would lead sheep. This witness of the scriptures should have literally leaped out at them - (and probably did for some John 1:12) but there was no footing for acceptance in their stony hearts. Other passages in Isaiah would be 7:8 - 16; 9:6; 11:1 - 5. For an

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³ Matt. 3:13 - 17; Mark 1:9 - 11; Luke 3:12, 22; cf. John 1:31 - 34.

**Four Witnesses of Christ,
the Final Indictment Against Unbelief.**

excellent treatment on this subject I recommend [Messianic Prophecies](#), by J. Hampton Keithley III of Biblical Studies Foundation - a web based article.⁴

Jesus' Final Indictment on Unbelief.

And ye will not come to me, that ye might have life. [41] I receive not honour from men. [42] But I know you, that ye have not the love of God in you. [43] I am come in my Father's name, and ye receive me not: if another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive. [44] How can ye believe, which receive honour one of another, and seek not the honour that cometh from God only? [45] Do not think that I will accuse you to the Father: there is one that accuseth you, even Moses, in whom ye trust. [46] For had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me; for he wrote of me. [47] But if ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe my words? John 5:41 - 47.

Moses himself testified of Jesus Christ. God was careful to see that Christ was represented in both prophesy and typology. Think of the wonderful pictures represented in the design of the Tabernacle! The battle between the seed of woman and of Satan was depicted in Genesis 3:15; the Great Prophet was prophesied by Moses in Deuteronomy 18:15, **“The**

LORD thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken;” The list goes on and the indictment is sure - they did not believe

Moses, why now would they believe

Jesus Christ the Object of all Scriptural prophesies. The counts in this indictment against them stands. They rejected the Christ - they stand condemned in their active unbelief. John 3:36.

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⁴ <http://www.bible.org/>