

## THE WITNESSES

John 5:30-47  
Key Verse: 5:44

Lesson #14

In chapters 5-12 the author describes Jesus' testimony to the Jewish leaders. He earnestly wanted them to accept him as their Messiah and be blessed by God. John 1:11 describes this ministry in one sentence: "He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him." He did his best help the Jewish leaders believe that he was the Messiah. But they rejected him because they looked at him with political and human eyes. In John 5:30-47, we can see the anatomy of unbelief. Belief/unbelief is not an intellectual matter. The Jews had ample opportunity to know that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God. These verses show us that there were many witnesses to Jesus. There were both competent human witnesses like John the Baptist; there was Jesus' own testimony about himself and there was the witness of God the Father. But in spite of these witnesses, they refused to believe.

God is a Spirit. He cannot be seen with our physical eyes nor heard with our physical ears (37). But he bore testimony to Jesus the Messiah in two ways. First, he granted Jesus the power to do mighty works. He healed the sick and cast out demons; he made the lame to walk and touched the lepers with compassionate hands of healing. He fed the multitude. Second, he bore witness to Jesus the Messiah through his word, the Bible. Isaiah and the prophets wrote about him (Isa 53, Isa 9, etc). Moses wrote about him. The Exodus and the Passover lamb and the whole sacrificial system point to Jesus.

These Jews rejected Jesus. They had seen his gracious works. They had heard John's witness. They had even studied the Scriptures which testify about Jesus. But still they did not believe. Why? The first reason was a lack of love. Jesus said, "I know that you do not have the love of God in your hearts." (42) They were religious men, but their religion was man-centered. They met to worship, but they didn't think about God. They thought about people. They sought to be praised by people (44). They did not try to please God; they only tried to please themselves. (Compare Jesus' attitude in verse 30.) The second reason for their unbelief is that they had a wrong attitude toward the Bible. They studied the Bible diligently, looking for eternal life, but they did not come to Jesus--the one about whom the Bible is written. Eternal life is knowing God and knowing Jesus (17:3). They acquired much knowledge and information about God, but because they did not open their hearts to believe and receive and obey the word of God, they could not meet God. They studied very much, but God's word was not planted in their hearts. The main subject of the Bible is Jesus. The

main purpose of Bible study is to meet and know Jesus personally. If we read the Bible like we read a love letter, we can meet Jesus and his Father, the eternal God. When we know Jesus personally, we have eternal life. Even though we have all the information about God, if we have no personal relationship with him, we are spiritually dead. We who study the Bible very much must be careful not to become proud, practical atheists like the Jewish leaders of Jesus' day. We must come to Jesus for forgiveness and salvation and eternal life.