



July 31, 2022

“A False Christianity – Part 1”

SS 9:30, Service at 10:30 with King’s Kids.

News:

Church **Camp** Aug 22-24

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The entire _____ is one cohesive whole driving to one intensely important _____, and it is the difference between having a religion of death and having Life in Christ.

The man at the Pool was more _____ by the brand of Judaism he accepted, and by the Jewish religious leaders he recognized, than he was by the man through whom the miraculous power to heal him flowed.

The healed man, and subsequently the Jews, _____ God’s power from God Himself.

Why? Because Jesus didn’t _____ their idea of a godly man, let alone of God made man.

This is the theme: People are so full of self-love and fear that we _____ our own belief system to _____ ourselves.

Religion is a set of often contradictory, yet dogmatically held, _____ that correspond to our identity – our self-image.

Fill out the other side, detach this part of the page, and place it in the offering plate or the prayer/suggestion box in the lobby or with an Elder or Deacon of the church.

God Bless You!

We humans love religion, because it gives us a sense of stability and control in a _____ world.

So, we manufacture gods, otherwise known as opinions, and then _____ them for the True God.

When the True God shows up, we don't _____ Him.

JOHN 5:30-47 ~

Verse 30 brings us back to verse 19. Jesus is only doing precisely what Father God has Him do – nothing more, nothing less. Jesus will later say in this Gospel, “He who has _____ Me has _____ the Father” (John 14:9).

The Jews then, just like so many Christians since, believed that they knew and loved the Father, and yet, they could not _____ the Father in Jesus.

The actual Jesus was far too _____ than the Savior that they imagined.

Is the actual Jesus far too _____ than the Savior that we imagine?

We embrace a false Jesus and so we practice “A false Christianity.” At least to some degree. Our goal is to _____ that degree of falsity a minimum.

We don't know Christ as accurately as we could, not because He's difficult to know, but because we _____ ourselves.

Jesus' judgment is perfect because He never _____ His own will, desire, or agenda, but the Father's.

This is precisely where we go _____ and why our religion is death and why we practice a false Christianity. We are not like Jesus. We seek our own will, desire, and agenda, not His.

Write a brief note – detach and place in the offering, or the prayer box, or give it to a Deacon or Elder.

Name _____ Address _____

Phone _____ Email _____

We pivot again in verse 31 to a surface level and a deeper level of _____ of what Jesus has been saying.

Surface: Humans need more than just Jesus' own _____ about Himself and so He points to the testimony of the Father through...

- 1) John the Baptist.
- 2) Through the entire body of His appointed work on earth.
- 3) Through the Father's own testimony.
- 4) Through His Holy Word in written form.

Deeper: Jesus' personal _____ alone is not true, in the sense that it is incomplete, or insufficient in itself, because He is not an individual all alone and He refuses to operate independently.

It is then God Who _____ in His Triunity.

Verses 33-35 show that the _____ to John was the same as that to the healing, and we'll see it with every other witness. In each case, the people are at least intrigued by the witness, but they disregard the testimony that they give.

Because Jesus... Because God, doesn't _____ their image.

John was paving the way for a King Who would set everything right. He would utterly annihilate the Romans and their Jewish sympathizers. He would purge the ungodly, and the less devout Jews in a bloody civil war to create a Promised Land where everyone would be like them – holy and good, moral and religious, Jewish and conservative.

Today, in America, it seems that most Christians are yearning for the same King Who will set everything right. Annihilate the Democrats, and their RINO sympathizers. Purge the ungodly, and the less devout Christians in a bloody civil war to create a Promised Land where everyone would be like us – holy and good, moral and religious, Christian and conservative.

The next witness is the "The works." The construction points to the _____ of what Jesus was sent to accomplish. The Jews actually believed much of what Jesus did but _____ to accept the logical ramifications.

Verses 37&38 should be:

Premise: And the Father who sent Me, He has testified of Me

Rebuke 1) You have not heard His voice at any time

Rebuke 2) You have not seen His form

Rebuke 3) You do not have His word abiding in you

Proof: For you do not believe Him whom He sent.

Had the Jews seeking to destroy Jesus ever heard, seen, or embraced God, they would have _____ Him. Since they did not _____ Jesus, it proved that they did not know God the Father.

This is the fundamental theme... We _____ ourselves so much that we craft gods that resonate with us, instead of getting to know the One and Only True God as He is. We pretend that our self-made gods are really the One and Only True God because we don't want to _____ that what we truly worship is self.

Why do we taint and tarnish the real God for a false god? Fundamentally, it is because we are _____ of what we might discover. Far easier to distort God into a more agreeable idol.

The fourth witness beyond Christ's own testimony is the Scriptures. Moses recorded the oral tradition through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit 35 centuries ago, and ever since, people have read their own _____ into the text.

We do the _____ with the Christian Bible that has existed for 19 centuries.

Confirmation bias finds what can be _____ to fit an ideology and ignores what flies in the face of that ideology.

We end up with human ideologies with a slathering of Christian gravy on top and call it _____ Belief in the _____ Creator.

Search the _____ and you will always find what your heart desires. I guess the key is changing the desire of your _____.



Lêtheia

CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP




the gospel of

JOHN

ΕΝΑΡΧΗ Η ΝΟΛΟΓΟΣ ΚΑΙ ΛΟΓΟΣ ΕΝ Η ΠΡΟΣΤΗ
 ΘΗ ΚΑΙ ΘΕ ΤΗ ΝΟΛΟΓΟΣ ΕΣΤΙ ΤΟΣ Η ΝΕΝΑΡΧΗ ΤΙΡΟΣ
 ΤΟΝ ΘΗ ΠΑΝΤΑ ΔΙΑ ΤΟΥ ΕΓΕΝΕ ΤΟ ΚΑΧΟΤΙΣ

Last week we finished with John chapter 5, verse 29 and today we'll get the first half of a two-parter to finish the chapter. From verse 30 to verse 47, is a lengthy bit of Holy Scripture – unfortunately too lengthy for an in-depth study in one Sunday. Why not just take it in two parts as opposed to making it a two-parter?

These final 18 verses of the chapter form a single closing crescendo where Jesus very forcefully drives home the theme of the entire chapter. This is the continuation of Jesus speaking to “the Jews persecuting Him” and “Seeking all the more to kill Him” (John 5:16&18) that started back in verse 19. This remaining passage will seem long, it will seem disjointed, and it will be hard to follow. That’s why we need two Sundays.

My earnest prayer is that God gives you “Ears to hear what the Spirit is saying to the church” (Revelation 2:7, etc.). As long and convoluted as this discourse by Jesus seems, it is really incredibly simple once we grasp that there is really only one central theme. That the entire chapter is one cohesive whole driving to one intensely important point.

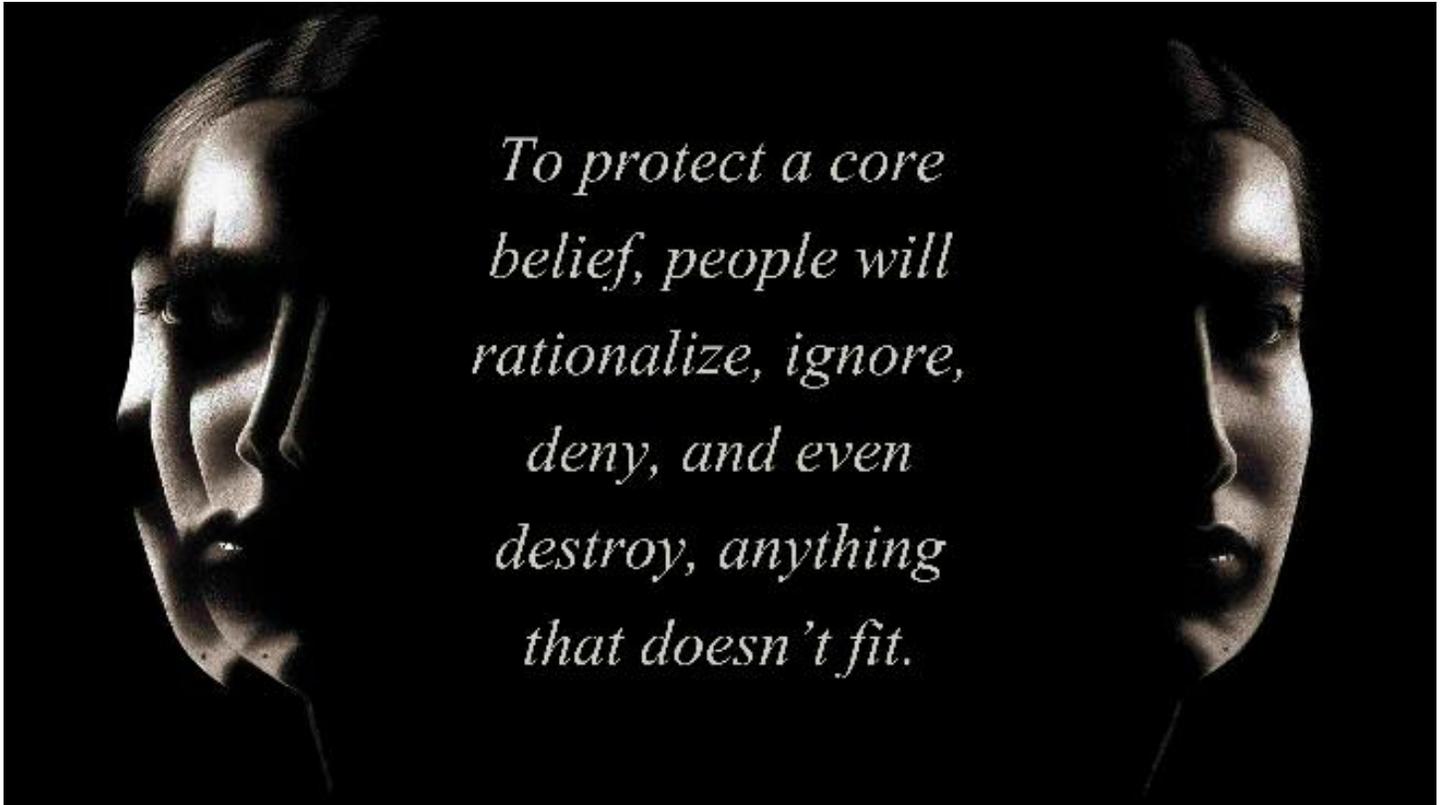
That theme, that point, is perhaps the most important thing in all of Christianity. It is a Message from Jesus Himself through the power of the Holy Spirit to reveal to us a critical Truth that is the difference between having a religion of death and having Life in Christ. It can't get much more important than that.



Because for millennia before Moses, most human beings embraced a religion of death. For millennia since Moses, most Jews have embraced a religion of death. For millennia since Christ, most Christians have embraced a religion of death.

Dead people manufacture, practice, and promote, their own special and unique religious beliefs trying to answer the big questions, and trying to have more success in life, and trying to ensure happiness in the life after, and what they actually obtain is a religion of death. All of them, billions of people through eons of time, thought that their particular religion was religion of truth, of prosperity, of eternal bliss, and they were all wrong.

This message is directly from the lips of the Lord Jesus Christ as supernaturally preserved by the Holy Spirit. It will challenge you. If it doesn't, you have missed the point. Some may reject the message, some may be angry, disillusioned, or otherwise upset by it. Good. Wrestle with God about it because this is probably the most important message I have ever delivered. Your fight is with Jesus, not me – I'm just the messenger. I say that, but I'm quite familiar with what happens to the messenger.



*To protect a core
belief, people will
rationalize, ignore,
deny, and even
destroy, anything
that doesn't fit.*

Before I read, I want to remind you how we got here. Jesus personally selected a particular person and healed him physically. More importantly, Jesus offered to heal him spiritually, but the man refused because he could not connect the Jesus in front of him with his own religious opinions.

He was more influenced by the brand of Judaism he accepted and by the Jewish religious leaders he recognized than he was by the man through whom the miraculous power to heal him flowed. As we said then, the man disconnected God's power from God Himself. In other words, he believed that it was possible that

God's healing power could be separated from God. That it could come through a pool of water disturbed by an angel, or in this case, by Jesus, a blaspheming anti-god Law breaker.

The religious leaders believed the same thing – disconnecting the miraculous healing from the man through whom the healing took place because of the way He did it – because Jesus didn't fit their idea of a godly man, let alone of God made man.

This is the theme. People are so full of self-love and fear that we create our own belief system to protect ourselves. Well, that's what religion is – it is a set of often contradictory, yet dogmatically held, opinions that correspond to our identity – to our self-image. By any other name it is religion, and we are fervent in our religious zeal.

We humans love religion, because it gives us a sense of stability and control in a chaotic world.

Whether it is a congresswoman promoting Christian Nationalism, or a humanist promoting abortion rights, or a scientist promoting an impending climate

apocalypse, or an educator promoting social neo-evolution, or a Marxist philosopher promoting Critical Theory. Human beings have deeply held convictions about the meaning of life and beyond. These are personal religions based upon core beliefs, that are rarely more than arbitrary assumptions. At the end of the day, they are opinions – and everyone has one.

Our opinions are the little gods that we create and then place upon the mantle of our heart where we can worship them.

We then mistake those idols for the True God so that when He actually shows up, we don't recognize Him. But woe to the person who points that out. Woe to the one who tries to knock one of our personal gods off the mantle. Woe to the person who disagrees with our opinions, especially those opinions central to our identity.

That's uplifting. Well, you need to hear the bad news before you are ready to properly accept the good news. If I drag you out of your house by your ankle you cannot properly accept that as good, until you are told that your house is on fire. The question before us isn't

what religion is best, the question is... Is there something other than religion?



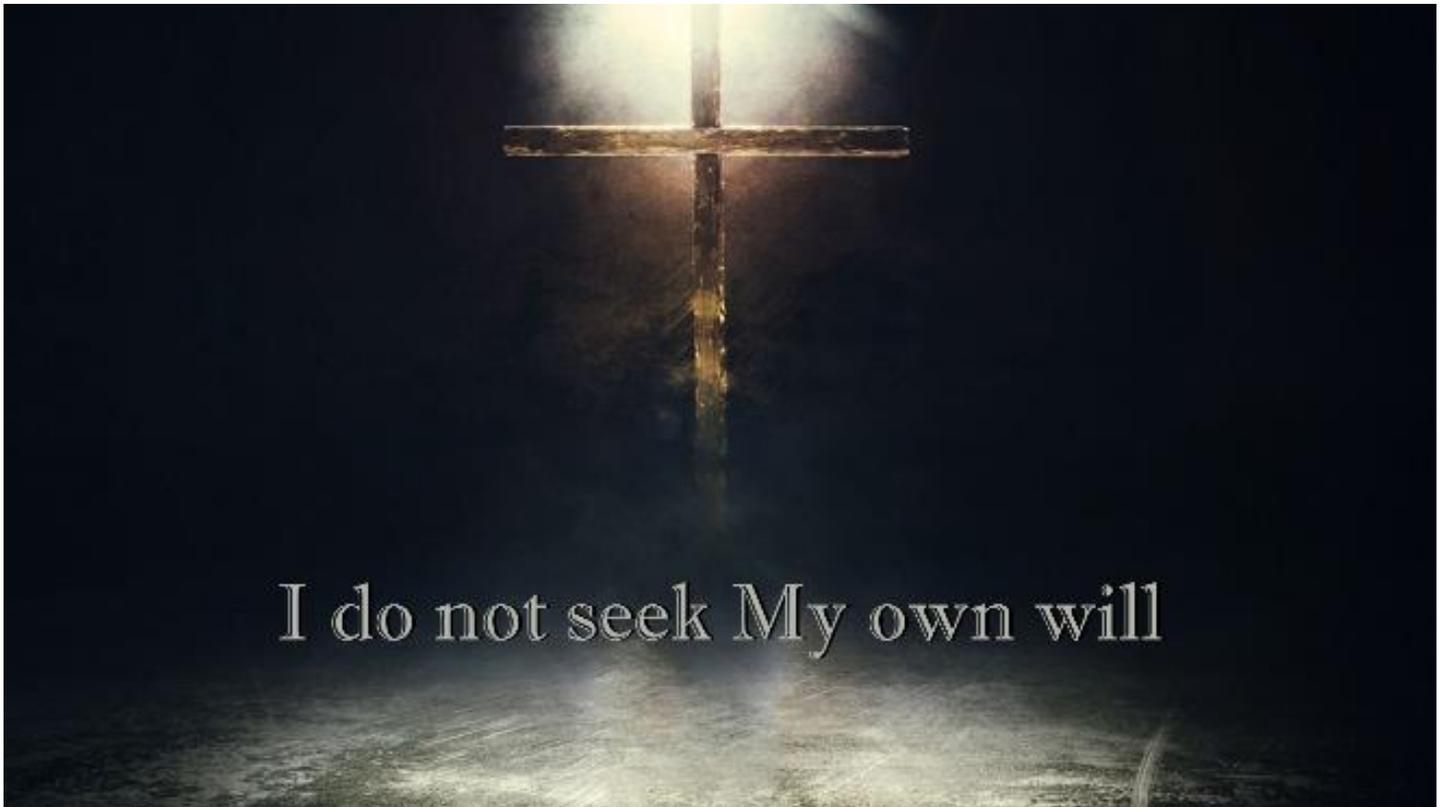
JOHN 5:30-47 ~ Continuing His Message to those opposed to Him, Jesus said... 30“I am not able to do anything by myself; Just as I hear I judge, and my judgment is righteous, because I do not seek my will but the will of the one who sent me” 31“If I testify concerning myself, my witness is not sufficient” 32“There is another who testifies concerning me, and I know that the witness that he testifies concerning me is sufficient” 33“You have sent to John, and he has testified to the truth” 34“I do not receive the witness from a man, but I say these things in order that you

might be saved” 35“John was the lamp that burned and shined, and you wanted to rejoice in his light for a time” 36“But I have a witness greater than that of John, for the works that the Father has given to me so that I might complete them, which I am doing, testify concerning me that the Father has sent me” 37“And the Father who sent me has himself testified about me. You have neither heard his voice at any time nor seen his form” 38“Nor do you have his word remaining in you, because you do not believe the one whom he sent” 39“ You search the Scriptures, because you think in them you have eternal life, and yet those witnesses are about me” 40“ And you are not willing to come to me in order to have life” 41“ For I do not receive recognition from humanity” 42“ But I know you, that you do not have the love for God in yourselves” 43“ I have come in the name of my Father and you do not receive me. If another comes in his own name, you will receive him” 44“ How can you believe when you receive recognition from one another and do not seek recognition from the Only God?” 45“ Do not think that I will accuse you before the Father. The one who accuses you is Moses, in whom you have placed your hope” 46“ For if you believed Moses, you would believe

me, for he wrote about me” 47“But since you do not believe what he wrote, how will you believe my words?”



We start with another hinge verse in verse 30, pivoting us slightly to another way to understand what Jesus is trying to convey. We’ve already seen a number of His statements of explanation, and we just read several more. That’s why it seems disjointed to us – Jesus was doing everything in His power to fully explain this incredibly vital idea from several different angles.



He said, 30 “I can do nothing on My own initiative. As I hear, I judge; and My judgment is just, because I do not seek My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me.”

This single verse says it all. Jesus brings us back to the beginning of His talk – back to verse 19. He is only doing precisely what Father God has Him do – nothing more, nothing less. Jesus will later say in this Gospel, “He who has seen Me has seen the Father” (John 14:9).

The Jews then, just like so many Christians since, wanted to honor the Father, believed that they were the children of the Father, were sure that they knew the

Father, and felt that they loved the Father, and yet, they could not recognize the Father in Jesus.

The actual Jesus was far too different than the Savior that they imagined. What I'm telling you today – what Jesus is telling you today – is we are doing the same thing that the Jews did back then. We believe in a Savior that is other than the Savior the Father provided. Ultimately, it is because we seek our own will.

We embrace a false Jesus and so we practice “A false Christianity.” I want you to freak out a bit, but not so much as to become distracted and miss the point. I will explain in detail as we move forward – stay with me. For now, please understand that no one in the history of the universe has had perfect theology and therefore, by definition, everyone has “A false Christianity” to some degree. Our goal is to reduce that degree of falsity to its minimum possible extent.

I don't know how distorted a person's view of Christ has to be before He isn't actually Christ, and it isn't actually Christianity, but I know that I want to be as accurate as possible, and I also know that the only

thing that can help us with that is the Bible. Holy Scripture is the basis and the framework for knowing Jesus – it cannot be otherwise. The Word reveals the Word.

Prayer, resting in the Lord's presence, personal and corporate worship... These are the ways we build our intimacy with Christ. They are not how we know Who He is. That's important. Everything that you learn about Jesus, outside of the Bible, must be carefully examined with, and conformed to, the Bible.

Here's the problem... We don't know Christ as accurately as we could, not because He's difficult to know, but because we love ourselves. Our self-love causes us to mold Jesus to conform to us. Truth with a capital "T," especially when directly related to Christ Himself, is as scary as anything we can imagine. Far easier to distort Jesus to be someone who fits nicely into the box that we have constructed for Him.

In verse 30 Jesus tied His superior position as Judge to His subservient position of the Son who only does His Father's Will, and through that explained another reason that His Judgment is perfect.

Remember in verse 27 we saw that Jesus proved His impeccable qualification to judge because He is the Son of Man – He lived a human life. Here, we see that what makes His judgment perfect is that He never seeks His own will, desire, or agenda, but the Father's.

This is precisely where we go wrong and why our religion is death and why we practice a false Christianity. We are not like Jesus. We seek our own will, desire, and agenda, not His. That's the entire problem. That's the very definition of sin. I love me. You love you. As Ed Klink put it, "While God loves us, we love ourselves... While we would sacrifice everything else for ourselves, God sacrificed Himself for everyone else."

This is where humanity always goes wrong. What does it take to be Saved? Belief. What does it take to believe? Humility. If truly accepting the Jesus of the Bible is the only requirement for eternal Life in God, why wouldn't every person on the planet do that – even as an unlikely insurance policy?

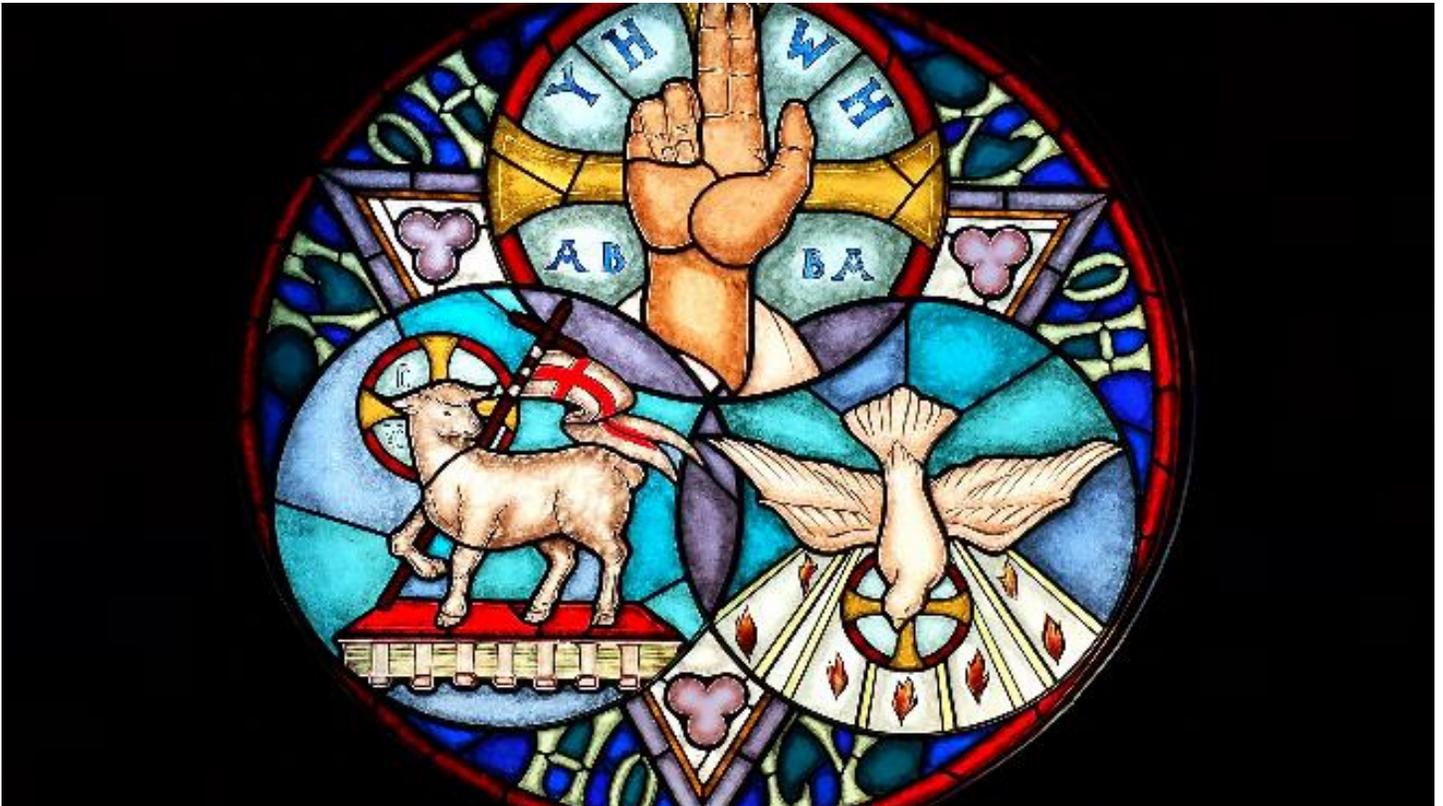
The only reason is that it takes a repudiation of self – a self-demeaning entire dependence upon Christ alone. Humans are not humble, and as such, we think our will, desire and agenda is right. We struggle to give in because I love me and you love you – human self-love is the very heart and core of sin, death, and the grave.

Jesus does the Father's Will, not His own – what will we do?



We pivot again in verse 31, “If I alone testify about Myself, My testimony is not true.” On a surface level, Judgment is still in view here, but has now switched to human judgment – how can a person judge correctly,

that Jesus is Who He claims to be? Taken in that vein, He rightly states that humans would need more than just Jesus' own testimony about Himself and so He goes on to demonstrate that the testimony of the Father through 1) John the Baptist, 2) through the entire body of His appointed work on earth, 3) through the Father's own testimony and 4) through His Holy Word in written form.



At a deeper level what Jesus was saying is that His personal testimony alone is the opposite of valid – it's not true, in the sense that it is incomplete or insufficient in itself because He is not an individual all alone, and He refuses to operate independently.

As has been repeatedly demonstrated in this Gospel so far, Jesus and the Heavenly Father along with the Holy Spirit always exist in perfect unified harmony. For the Father to testify without the Spirit is partial, for the Spirit to testify without the Christ is incomplete, for the Christ to testify without the Father is insufficient – it gives the wrong impression and is therefore not fully true.

Jesus' testimony about Himself is only part of the picture and so He addresses that insufficiency by saying in verse 32, "There is another who testifies of Me, and I know that the testimony which He gives about Me is true." The other Who testifies at a surface level is the Father through the various forms I've already listed – John, works, Self, and Scripture.

When we take it deeper it is actually God Who testifies in His Triunity... What is made crystal clear is that only the totality of God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit can provide a coherent, cohesive, complete testimony about Jesus that is entirely true.



Verses 33-35 talk about the testimony through John the Baptist. There is a response to John that is the same response to the miraculous healing of the man at the pool and it is the same response we'll see with every other witness. In each case, the people are at the very least intrigued by the witness, but they entirely disregard the testimony that they give.

Jesus healed the man and while the man and the religious people would agree that it was God's power through Jesus, they disbelieved the testimony of that power. The miracle was great – thank you God, but the One through Whom God wrought the miracle was

worthy of death. It's a disconnect between honoring the witness and repudiating the very thing that they testify about.

John the Baptist was a celebrity. He was an interesting fellow. His dad was a respected Priest and John should have followed in his father's footsteps. He was no doubt highly trained for the priesthood and was known by the Jewish leadership. The people clamored for John and the ministry He was performing. It was exciting. Even the Jewish leaders didn't act against him, unwilling to take sides on his validity. Jesus asked them, "Was the baptism of John from heaven, or from man?" To which they refused to answer (Mark 11:30, etc.).

John was paving the way for the mighty Messiah King Who would set everything right. Annihilate the Romans, and their Jewish sympathizers, perhaps killing them all in vengeful slaughter. Purge the ungodly, the atheists, agnostics, and less devout Jews in a bloody civil war to create a Promised Land where everyone would be like them – holy and good, moral and religious, Jewish and conservative.



Today, in America, it seems that most Christians are yearning for the same Messiah King Who will set everything right. Annihilate the Democrats, and their RINO sympathizers, perhaps killing them all in vengeful slaughter. Purge the ungodly, the atheists, agnostics, and less devout Christians in a bloody civil war to create a Promised Land where everyone would be like us – holy and good, moral and religious, Christian and conservative.

There is a wonderful blueprint for that kind of theocratic, nationalistic, forced godly conservatism to be found in both Iran and Afghanistan. Imagine an

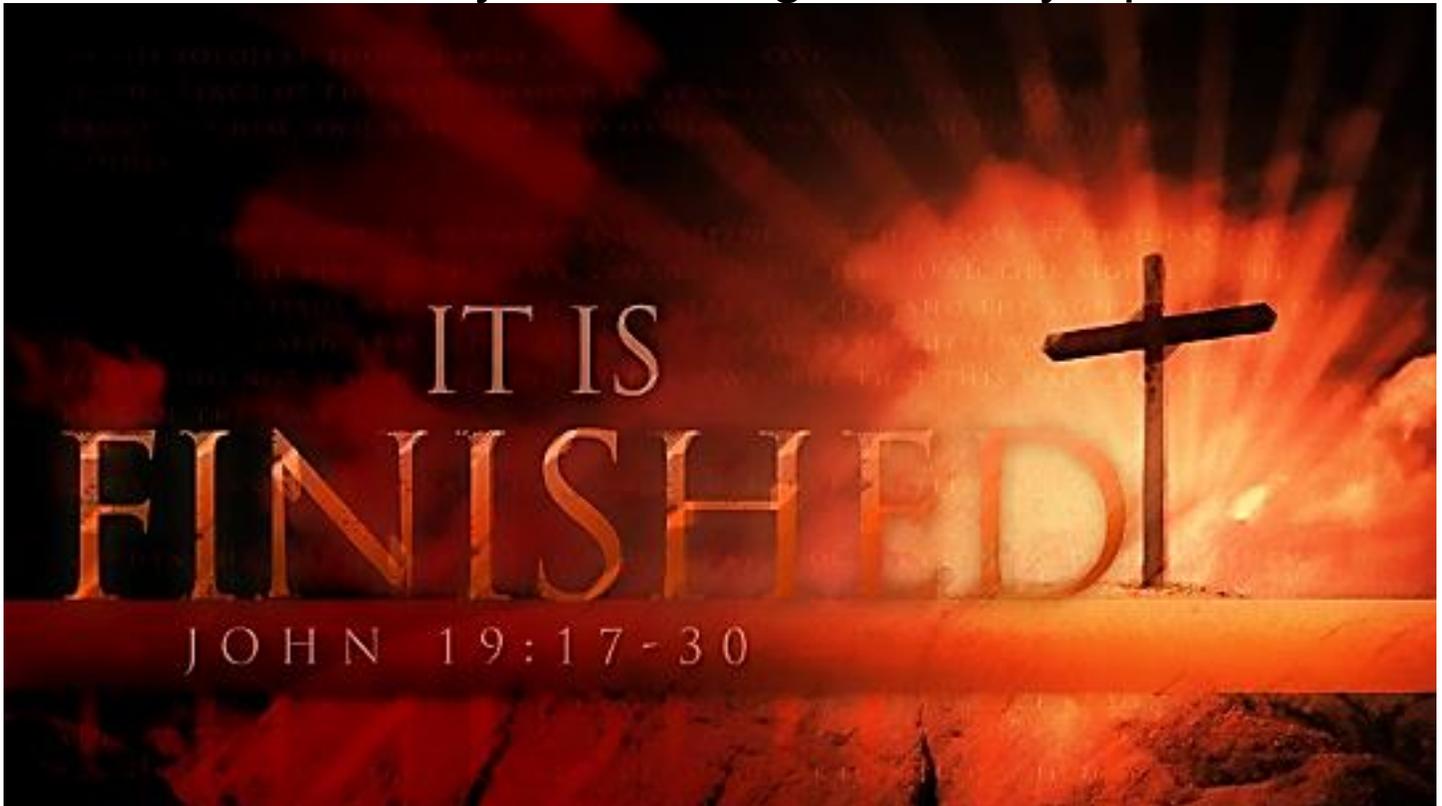
America where everyone is just like you. How wonderful right? All we need to do is get rid of everyone who disagrees. “There is nothing new under the sun” (Ecclesiastes 1:9).



John clearly and publicly declared that Jesus was, “The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!” And John said, “I myself have seen, and have testified that this is the Son of God” (John 1:29&34). While everyone was at the very least intrigued by John, they entirely dismissed his testimony about Jesus.

The Father testified to the people through John’s ministry at the one level, but at the deeper level we

could say that while John's calling came from the Father, His ministry was through the Holy Spirit.



The next witness is the “The works which the Father has given Me to accomplish.” In immediate view is the healing of the pool man that got this whole thing in chapter 5 started, but the Greek construction points to the entirety of what Jesus was sent to accomplish. That goes back to His Baptism, the water into wine, the stopping of the corrupt sacrificial system in the Temple and everything else Jesus had already done, but of course also to what He had left to do, namely His death, resurrection, and ascension. They actually

believed much of what Jesus did but refused to accept the logical ramifications.

Jesus said, “The Father has sent Me.” Obviously at the surface that is the Father testifying through the activity of the Son. Just as obviously, the activity was through the power of the Holy Spirit, as it was the Holy Spirit Who descended upon and remained with Jesus at His Baptism. Only the Trinity as a whole gives an accurate testimony.



Verses 37&38, seem puzzling at first blush, 37“And the Father who sent Me, He has testified of Me. You have neither heard His voice at any time nor seen His form.

38“You do not have His word abiding in you, for you do not believe Him whom He sent.”

Part of the issue is the translation makes it seem as though there's a break between verse 37 and verse 38. The better way to format the two verses is to see it first as a premise, or opening statement to set the stage...

“And the Father who sent Me, He has testified of Me.”

Premise: And the Father who sent Me, He has testified of Me

Rebuke 1) You have not heard His voice at any time

Rebuke 2) You have not seen His form

Rebuke 3) You do not have His word abiding in you

Proof: For you do not believe Him whom He sent

Next, we have three bullet points rebuking the Jews. 1) they had not heard the Father's voice. 2) They had not seen the Father's form. 3) They did not have the Father's Word abiding in them. After the three-fold rebuke Jesus gave His proof that such was the case, namely, that had they had any real knowledge of the

real Father, they would have eagerly embraced Jesus. Since they didn't, it proved that they were not in tune with the true God.

The Father's testimony here, is again, in harmony with the Holy Spirit, because the witness here is the Spirit of God influencing His true children. The Father's children hear His voice and see His character and have His true Word abiding in them through the power of His Holy Spirit.

What is that Word that abides? Jesus Himself, even in the Patriarchs. The manifestation of God is always His Word, and so, even for an Old Testament saint to hear the Father was to hear Jesus. To see the Father was to see Jesus. To possess the Father's Word was to possess Jesus. Had the Jews seeking to destroy Jesus ever heard, seen, or embraced God, they would have seen, heard, and embraced Jesus.

When He then appeared in flesh and blood, they would have recognized Him. Since they did not recognize Jesus, it proved that they did not know God the Father.

This is the fundamental theme... We religious humans love ourselves so much that we craft gods that resonate with us, instead of getting to know the One and Only True God as He is. We pretend that our self-made gods are really the One and Only True God because we don't want to admit that what we truly worship is self. Whether that's at a subconscious level or not, we mold our religious belief to serve us.

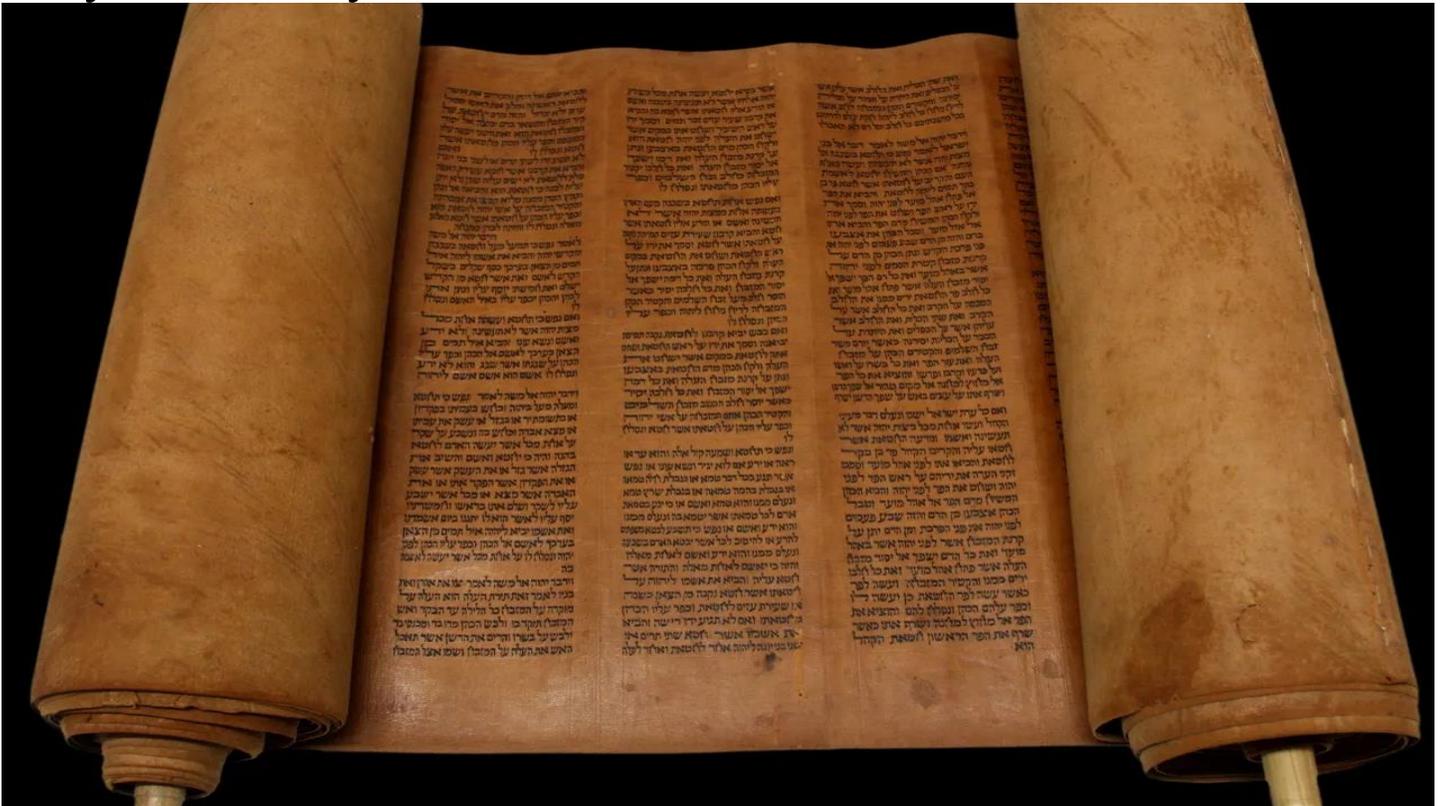
Voltaire's words are some of the truest ever spoken, "In the beginning God created man in His own image, and man has been trying to repay the favor ever since." Put more succinctly perhaps, "Man made god in his own image."

The infamous philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche went further pointing out that after each person creates his own god, there can be no worse enmity than that between gods. You see to disagree with a person is not to disagree with them, but with the god of their religion.

Why do we taint and tarnish the real God for a false god? Fundamentally, it is because we are afraid of what we might discover – what the True God might encourage, or even force us, to do, or to be, or to give

up, or the endure. Far easier to distort God into a more agreeable idol.

If you think that the god you know is perfectly the God Who is, you are mistaken. The healed man and the religious leaders were all 100% certain that the god they served was the True God and they were so wrong they ultimately killed the True God made man.



The fourth witness beyond Christ's own testimony...
39 "You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; it is these that testify about Me; 40 and you are unwilling to come to Me so that you

may have life. This is the biggest problem in all religions that have a written document. Interpretation.

The Torah, in written form, has existed for 35 centuries. Moses recorded the oral tradition through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit and ever since, people have read their own ideas into the text.

We do the same with the Christian Bible that has existed for 19 centuries. The single biggest reason for bad doctrine is misunderstanding what the Bible says, but the biggest reason people misunderstand is because they want to misunderstand. Confirmation bias finds what can be distorted to fit an ideology and ignores what flies in the face of that ideology.

We end up with human ideologies with a slathering of Christian gravy on top and call it True Belief in the True Creator. "Torture Scripture enough and it will testify to anything." Search the Scriptures and you will always find what your heart desires. I guess the key is changing the desire of your heart.



We will look deeper into this monumentally important Truth and we will learn how to ensure that the Jesus we obey, the Father we worship, and the Spirit we follow, is the One and Only True God and not the manufacture of our desire.