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THE 6TH WITNESS ??

Ever been surrounded by a pack of wolves out for blood? Not furry-four-legged varmints, but the two-legged variety? Jesus was. And in John 5:30-47 you read about His legal defense before the religious authorities of Jewish law. Here's how Jesus turned the tables on them -- and puts you on notice too.

Recall from last time that Jesus had healed a man on the Sabbath. Hauled before the authorities, He defends His authority not only to raise up a paralyzed man, but to raise up to new eternal resurrection life, anyone who would believe in Him. Now He answers the legal challenge. And in doing so, He claims to be God. Not once, but numerous times. He calls five witnesses -- and one mystery witness.

The FIRST witness for the defense = Jesus calls Himself. Verse 30 says "*I can do nothing on My own... only the will of Him who sent Me.*" His authority for what He does and says is none other than God Himself. To the ears of these religious authorities, Jesus made Himself equal with God. Blasphemy! Plus, Old Testament law required two or three witnesses to establish a legal claim. Jesus as God needs no cadre of testimony -- but Jesus provides them, so that the people will believe.

The SECOND witness = John the Baptizer. Jesus says in verse 32, "*the testimony he bears about Me is true.*" The authorities have already accepted him as a messenger from God. Prophesied to come as the forerunner, John proclaimed the coming Christ who ushers in the kingdom of God, and is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. John told everyone that Christ would baptize with the Holy Spirit. And Jesus says "*the testimony that I have is greater than that of John.*"

The THIRD witness = the miracles of Jesus. In verse 36, Jesus says, "*The works the Father has given Me to accomplish, the very works that I am doing, bear witness about Me that the Father has sent Me.*" In John 3 Nicodemus confessed the religious leaders knew Jesus had God's authority because of the miracles. That was their God-ordained purpose. Chapters 1-5 recount how in His own person, words and works, Jesus reveals Himself as God. He is the light and life. All who believe in Him are born again from above by the Holy Spirit. Jesus turns the water of Jewish tradition into the fine new wine of God's truth. He drives out uncleanness from the temple. Jesus gives the living water of the Holy Spirit to transform even non-Jews into God's children. And He heals people -- just by His words.

The FOURTH witness = God the Father. Verse 37, "*The Father who sent Me has Himself borne witness about Me. But you do not have His Word abiding in you, for you do not believe.*" John 1 says Jesus the Son has made God known. He embodies God's grace and truth, in the flesh. God spoke at Jesus' baptism, "*This is My beloved Son in Whom I am well pleased.*" Jesus speaks the words of God. And the Word of God speaks about Jesus. But are you like the leaders, revering and reading the Bible -- but not believing what God wrote? Jesus said, "*you search the Scriptures because you think in them you have eternal life, and they bear witness about ME -- yet you refuse to come to Me that you may have life.*" Everyone makes excuses. Yet unbelief is not lack of evidence, but lack of will to believe.

The FIFTH witness = Moses, the Lawgiver. Verse 45 says "*Do not think that I will accuse you to the Father. There is one who accuses you: Moses on whom you have set your hope. For if you believed Moses, you would believe Me, for He wrote of Me.*" The authorities exalted Moses, justified their traditions on his writings -- but fail to see and believe all the Old Testament says about Jesus. Yet the whole Bible is all about God's plan of redemption through Jesus as the promised Lord and Christ. For example, see Luke 24:27 and 2 Timothy 3:15. In verse 47, Jesus says, "*If you do not believe the Scriptures, how will you believe My words?*" This makes His words equal with God's Words. And His defense actually puts on trial ALL those who pretend to try Him. Now, the mystery witness...

The SIXTH witness = is it YOU? After all this evidence, what do YOU say? Do you reject Him or receive Him? Do you come to the light? Will you be born again from above by the Holy Spirit? Like the man in John 5, Jesus asks you -- Do you want to be healed? Jesus says, "*Come to Me that you may have life!*"

So what testimony DO you give about Jesus? Believe Him. Receive Him as your Lord and Savior. Then be a witness -- tell everyone around you TODAY how they too can have LIFE in Jesus' name!