

THE SUFFICIENT WITNESS TO CONFIRM THE AUTHORITY OF JESUS (JOHN 5:30-40)

INTRODUCTION

We live in a pluralistic context in which there is a belief that there is no single absolute faith. When we talk about religion we tend to believe in any teaching which stresses on anything that is good and without justification and condemnation of any other faith. It is in such a context that we live. When we turn to the Bible, which has a profound statement that Jesus Christ is the only true way (John 14:6); even Paul in I Tim 2:5 says “There is only one God and only one mediator between God and man and that is Jesus Christ”. In our present time we are targeted from all sides of we continue to confess that, Jesus is the only true way. So our concerned is who is this Jesus Christ? That we confess as our Savior and redeemer is there sufficient witness to confirm that He is the only way, the truth and the life? So, this morning I will try to bring to the light the sufficient witnesses to confirm the authority of Jesus Christ.

Let us turn our attention to the background of the given passage to begin with.

BACKGROUND

The writer of the fourth Gospel was John who was one of the followers of Jesus Christ. It was written in Galilee in around 90th AD. It was at this time that there was a tension between Jewish religion and Johannine community between those who strictly followed the Mosaic Law and monotheism and with those who believed that, Jesus Christ is the Messiah. There were two reasons of argument in this passage : firstly, that he healed the paralytic on the Sabbath; and secondly, that equated himself with God (Jh 5:25) which was contrary to the monotheistic belief. Therefore the question arose on what basis does Jesus claim to be the savior whether there were sufficient witnesses to his being so?

The term “witness” comes from Greek word *Mortureo*, which means the one who testify by act or words to the truth. Deu 19:15 says that a single witness shall not suffice, but only on the evidence of two or three witnesses shall a charge be sustained. In John 57:30-40 “There are valid and sufficient witnesses to support his claim”.

1. John the Baptist testifies the authority of Jesus.
2. The works of Jesus testify his authority.
3. The scriptures witness his authority,

John the Baptist testifies the authority of Jesus :-

First of all Jesus himself agree that is not acceptable for a man to testify for himself. Unless there are other witnesses and evidence one cannot testify one's authority he say in v. 31-32, if I testify about myself my testimony is not true. There is another who testifies on my behalf and I know that his testimony is true". With this words Jesus declared his first witness and that was John the Baptist who the Israelites respected, trusted and looked up to as one of the foremost prophets. In those days John preached about repentance and proclaimed that he was only making the way of the Lord straight (Jh. 1:27). John the Baptist said, "the one who is coming after me, I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandal". In the verses 29-33, John also witness that Jesus is the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world and also the one who baptizes with the Holy Spirit. And, especially in 1:34, John the Baptist testifies that Jesus is the Son of God. Even tough his life and ministry was very attractive to the people, but his main intention is to draw attention of the people to Jesus Christ as the Messaiah.

The works of Jesus testify his authority

As we have stated earlier, according to Israelites, law more than one witness for things to be approved or to be affirmed. In this case the works of Christ served as the second witness. In 5:36, Jesus said the works that the Father has entrusted him to complete, the very works that he was doing, testify on his behalf that the Father has sent him. In the beginning of this chapter we see Jesus healing the paralytic at the pool called Bethzatha. Furthermore, as we have read in all the four Gospels Jesus healed the people suffering from different type of sicknesses and problems such as the lame, the blind, the lepers, the paralytic and demon possessed and even raised the dead. The works of Jesus indeed prove to be sufficient witness to his authority. Jesus himself said in Jh. 14:11 that the people must atleast believe on the evidence of the miracles themselves, because nobody can do the things he did. Nobody has ever walked on the water, nobody has raised the dead except him. Undoubtedly his works, testify that Jesus is the Christ / Messiah.

The Scriptures testify the Authority of Jesus :-

Finally in the v.39 Jesus says, “you search the scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life and it is they that testify on my behalf”. When we turn to the Old Testament we find evidence which point to the coming of Messiah. We can find such evidence almost all the O.T. writings, but I would like to highlight only those portions which explicitly declare that Jesus is the Messiah. For instance, Genesis 3:15 talks about the woman’s seed that should crush the serpent’s head; and Genesis 12:2 says “And in you the family of the earth shall be blessed”. Further Isaiah in 7:14 and Micah in 5:2 speaks about the birth of Jesus Christ; Isaiah 42:1-7 and 61:1-11 talk about his ministry; and Isaiah 53:1-9 talks about his death and burial. Thus, we see that what was written in the scriptures about him was fulfilled in time. Infact he himself said in Luke 4:16, “Today the Scripture has been fulfilled”. This is enough to prove as Jesus said, the scriptures are sufficient testimony. Bu in the given passage there is a conflict between the witness and the unbelief of the religious leaders. Jesus statement you do not have his word abiding in you implies that if they had the word abiding in them they would believe in that testify / witness Jesus’ authority.

CONCLUSION

Hence, in our time we are desperately in need of the scripture as Martin Luther once asked to turn back to the Scriptures, because nowadays the faith of the people shattered due to different philosophies and theologies and we have overlooked the authority and reliability of the Scriptures as a witness to Christ. The testimony of John the Baptist teaches us how he attracts the people to draw attention to Christ. Thus the ultimate goal of the Church also in is to draw attention to Christ, the true Messiah ad the Savior of the world. We must always serve as witnesses in doing right works for his glory. We, the Christians must indeed be doers, not merely hearers especially in the Indian context, because the nation is struggling with poverty, health hazard, unemployment, communal disharmony, oppression of women and so on. The Church should act as a catalyst or an agent of change to transform the society at large by adopting the wholistic method in order to meet the felt needs of the peoples. Friends, Mother Teresa lived a life of social service, who occasionally talked and worked more. Her works became more meaningful and challenging than any other preachers in Kolkata. Let us do what we preach and work hard to be sufficient witnesses for Christ to all the people around us. Amen.