

Further up, Further in

Resources for Continued Study



LOOKOUT
MOUNTAIN
Presbyterian Church

“THE THREEFOLD WITNESS TO THE SON’S AUTHORITY”

DATE: April 26, 2026

SPEAKER: Chad/Richard Pratt

SERIES: The Gospel of John

PASSAGE: John 5:30-47

Family Dinner Table

The Shema

The Shema stands as the central pillar of biblical monotheism. It demands exclusive allegiance to the one LORD through holistic love involving heart, soul, and strength: “Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might” (Deuteronomy 6:4-5). In the *Divine Son Discourse* of John 5:19-47, the Apostle John intentionally hones in on God’s “oneness.” It echoes *The Shema*. In John 5, Jesus is saying that eternal life comes through him and that the Hebrew Scriptures are being fulfilled in him. Theologian Richard Bauckham argues that the NT, particularly the Gospel of John, presents a “*Christology of Divine Identity*.”³ In this framework, Jesus is presented not as an “alternative” god, but included within the unique singular identity of the one God of Israel. Later, in John 10:30, Jesus again states, “*I and the Father are one*,” referring to his unique identity and unity with the Father, which Bauckham believes is rooted in *The Shema*. The Gospel of John portrays the Hebrew Scriptures not as a separate historical record, but as a witness that finds its goal in Jesus. By mirroring *The Shema*’s language, John shows that true “hearing” leads directly to the Son. To reject Jesus is to fail to hear the very God *The Shema* commands all people to love.

- Read John 17:11, 20-22. How does Jesus’ claim to possess the name of God and a preexistent glory, two things Isaiah 42:8 and 48:11 state God shares with no one else, redefine the “oneness” of *The Shema*? Specifically, how do John 5 and 17 suggest that the Son of God’s “oneness” with the Father is an eternal, shared identity that is now made visible in Jesus?

For individual study or group discussion

In John 5:30-47, Jesus stands before a religious audience that prides itself on biblical literacy and social standing and exposes a deep spiritual disconnect. He confronts a fundamental human tendency to root authority in personal validation and the approval of peers. While the religious leaders seek “*glory from one another*,” Jesus grounds his absolute authority in a different reality altogether. He presents himself as the one in whom the Father’s voice, works, and Word perfectly converge. By examining his submission to the Father, his dismissal of mere human endorsement, and his claim as the true subject of the Hebrew Scriptures, we see that Jesus’ authority is undeniable because it is rooted in his unique identity as the Son.

Jesus’ absolute authority is not based on self-promotion. (vv. 30-32)

Jesus begins part two of the *Divine Son Discourse* with an astounding statement, “*I can do nothing on my own*.” For the Son of God to claim inability seems a bit paradoxical, but it is actually the ultimate claim of alignment with the Father. Under Jewish law, a single witness wasn’t enough to establish truth. Jesus honors this by stating that he doesn’t stand alone: “*There is another who bears witness about me, and I know that the testimony that he bears about me is true*” (v. 32). As theologian Frederick Dale Bruner explains, “*When Jesus gives his self-witness, it is always accompanied by the Spirit witness of his Father, accrediting Jesus to his hearers. This is the witness that all of us who have been hearers of Jesus through the centuries have been inwardly experiencing in our contacts with Jesus and why we have felt the confidence we do in Jesus. We are convinced of the Son’s truthfulness by the accrediting witness of his Father’s Spirit to our minds and hearts. There is no higher proof.*”¹

- Read 1 John 2:20, 4:13, and 5:6b. How do these passages deepen your understanding of why Jesus refused to rely on self-promotion? If the Spirit is the “*higher proof*” that teaches and confirms the truth of Jesus to our hearts, what would it look like for you to move away from self-reliance as you study the Scriptures and apply its truths to your life?

Jesus’ absolute authority is not dependent upon human testimony. (vv. 33-38)

Jesus acknowledges John the Baptist as a “*burning and shining lamp*,” yet he quickly clarifies that the testimony of works that his Father gave him bears greater witness to his identity. Though the religious leaders hear John’s reports and see Jesus’ miracles, they remain deaf to the Father’s voice. They possess the information but lack faith in the abiding Word. External religion offers no substitute for internal belief.

- John the Baptist is not the true Light (John 1:8); he is a light-bearer, a lamp. Read Psalm 132:17. In view of this Messianic promise, how does Jesus’ description of John the Baptist validate his own identity as the Anointed One?

Jesus’ absolute authority is divinely revealed in the Scriptures. (vv. 39-47)

This section is perhaps the most stinging part of the *Divine Son Discourse*. While the religious leaders claim expertise in the Law, they miss its entire aim: a signpost pointing directly to Christ. Because every word Moses writes presupposes the Messiah, their prophet will become their accuser when they stand in judgment on the last day. Their rejection of Jesus proves that it is possible to study the Scriptures and still miss God. Bruner drives this point home, stating “*The study of the Bible that is not preoccupied with the Bible’s Messiah is misoccupied, misplaced Bible study. Let us watch like hawks that our own ‘poring over’ Scripture has no other goal than to know Christ.*”²

- Read Romans 7:10 and Galatians 3:21-22. Based on these texts, how does treating the Bible as a “*checklist for life*” rather than a witness to Jesus turn a promise of life into a sentence of death?
- Jesus asks, “*How can you believe, when you receive glory from one another?*” We often idolize the approval of others, allowing people-pleasing and the fear of man to dictate our lives. Read Psalm 86:11. How do we reorient our desires?

PRAY FOR HOME MISSIONS

East Lake Expression Engine,
supported ministry partner

PRAY FOR WORLD MISSIONS

Pete Mitchell, MTW partner who leads
a church planting team in France

^{1,2} Frederick Dale Bruner. *The Gospel of John: A Commentary*. 2012, Grand Rapids, William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co. 338, 341

³ Richard Bauckham. *The Testimony of the Beloved Disciple: Narrative, History, and Theology in the Gospel of John*. 2007, Grand Rapids, MI, Baker Academic.