

# JESUS AS APOLOGIST

# DIALOGUE & DEBATE IN THE GOSPELS

“asked”

– 303 times

“answered”

– 144 times

“taught”

– 16 times

“proclaimed”

– 20 times

“preached”

– 22 times

# WHEN JOHN THE BAPTIST DOUBTED

When the men came to Jesus, they said, “John the Baptist sent us to you to ask, ‘**Are you the one who is to come, or should we expect someone else?’**”

At that very time Jesus cured many who had diseases, sicknesses and evil spirits, and gave sight to many who were blind. So he replied to the messengers, “Go back and report to John what you have seen and heard: The blind receive sight, the lame walk, those who have leprosy are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the good news is proclaimed to the poor. Blessed is anyone who does not stumble on account of me.” —

I tell you, among those born of women **there is no one greater than John**. Luke 7:21-28

## John 5

So, because Jesus was doing these things on the Sabbath, the Jews persecuted him. Jesus said to them, "My Father is always at his work to this very day, and I, too, am working." For this reason the Jews tried all the harder to kill him; not only was he breaking the Sabbath, but he was even calling God his own Father, making himself equal with God.

# ACCUSATIONS

Breaking the Sabbath

Blasphemy

*– calling God his own Father*

*– making himself equal with God*

Jesus gave them this answer: I tell you the truth, the Son can do nothing by himself; he can do only what he sees his Father doing, because whatever the Father does the Son also does. For the Father loves the Son and shows him all he does. Yes, to your amazement he will show him even greater things than these. For just as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, even so the Son gives life to whom he is pleased to give it. Moreover, the Father judges no one, but has entrusted all judgment to the Son, that all may honor the Son just as they honor the Father. He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father, who sent him.

I tell you the truth, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life. I tell you the truth, a time is coming and has now come when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God and those who hear will live. For as the Father has life in himself, so he has granted the Son to have life in himself. And he has given him authority to judge because he is the Son of Man.

Do not be amazed at this, for a time is coming when all who are in their graves will hear his voice and come out—those who have done good will rise to live, and those who have done evil will rise to be condemned. By myself I can do nothing; I judge only as I hear, and my judgment is just, for I seek not to please myself but him who sent me.

# ANSWERS: IDENTITY OF JESUS

## He is the Son of God

unique relation to the Father  
relationship of unity and love

## He shares essence & being with the Father

*just as the Father... so the Son... v. 21, 23, 26*

as the Father raises dead/gives them life... so the Son  
honour the Son just as they honour the Father  
as the Father has life in himself... so the Son

# ANSWERS: MISSION OF JESUS

**He is decisive for our final destiny**

*he will raise all from the dead*

*he will be the judge*

*he can give eternal life*

**Important ambiguity**

*on the last day*

*but already today*

# ARGUMENTS?

**He does not testify to himself, v 31**

would not be valid

no reason for us to believe him

**He points to four witnesses**

If I testify about myself, my testimony is not valid. There is another who testifies in my favor, and I know that his testimony about me is valid. You have sent to John and he has testified to the truth. Not that I accept human testimony; but I mention it that you may be saved. John was a lamp that burned and gave light, and you chose for a time to enjoy his light.

I have testimony weightier than that of John. For the very work that the Father has given me to finish, and which I am doing, testifies that the Father has sent me. And the Father who sent me has himself testified concerning me. You have never heard his voice nor seen his form, nor does his word dwell in you, for you do not believe the one he sent. You diligently study the Scriptures because you think that by them you possess eternal life. These are the Scriptures that testify about me, yet you refuse to come to me to have life.

# FOUR WITNESSES

## The Father

inner witness & public witness

## John the Baptist

a recognised prophet

## His works

miracles nobody could deny

## Scripture

Scripture/Moses testify

I do not accept praise from men, but I know you. I know that you do not have the love of God in your hearts. I have come in my Father's name, and you do not accept me; but if someone else comes in his own name, you will accept him. How can you believe if you accept praise from one another, yet make no effort to obtain the praise that comes from the only God?

But do not think I will accuse you before the Father. Your accuser is Moses, on whom your hopes are set. If you believed Moses, you would believe me, for he wrote about me. But since you do not believe what he wrote, how are you going to believe what I say?

# ACCUSATIONS – FROM JESUS

**You have a wrong attitude**

not arguments that is missing

## **Four accusations**

*You refuse to come to me*

*You do not have the love of God*

*You make no effort to obtain the praise that comes from the only God*

*You do not really believe in Scripture/Moses*

# CONCLUSION

The point is *not* to show the four best arguments *in our time* for belief in Jesus

**The point is to show how Jesus**

related his message to the mind

argued for the truth of his claims

challenged the thinking of his contemporaries

**Jesus was an apologist**

## JOHN 7:21–24

Jesus said to them, “I did one miracle, and you are all amazed. Yet, because Moses gave you circumcision (though actually it did not come from Moses, but from the patriarchs), you circumcise a boy on the Sabbath. Now if a boy can be circumcised on the Sabbath so that the law of Moses may not be broken, why are you angry with me for healing a man’s whole body on the Sabbath? Stop judging by mere appearances, but instead judge correctly.”