

#### #4 – John 1:19-34

**Need:** To catalogue the testimony of John, both as to denial and recognition direction attention to Jesus.

**Aim:** To see the testimony of John, as he denied being messiah and his recognition to the identity of Jesus.

**Title:** “To Tell the Truth”

**Prop:** In Jn. 1:1-34; the Apostle John catalogue the testimony of John the Baptist to the I. Denial and Recognition – 1:18-28 and to directed attention to II. Jesus and His Ministry – 1:29-34 that we might also have our direction focused upon Jesus.

**Intro:** Who are you? How would you define yourself? I know beyond a shadow of doubt that I am a child of God because I have trusted Jesus as Lord and Savior. Because of that relationship I have hope of eternal life. The definition of hope was much more than wishful thinking; it is a reality that has not yet happened, but most assuredly will indeed take place.

When I pray in my morning devotions, I ask for the empowerment and the anointing to be faithful as a disciple of Jesus, in my role as a husband, father, and grandfather. Then I pray for the same empowerment for my daily function as a Pastor, shepherd, leader, elder, example and preacher. Those are the duties to which I have been called each and every day, and as a disciple of Jesus I must perform and do so through God’s all-empowering presence of the Holy Spirit. Apart from this filling, I can do nothing pleasing unto God. All this is important information as you look at your life. We all have received a calling, so to speak.

It is not just pastors, missionaries or any other fulltime Christian workers who receive a call to service. We are all called to discipleship; but as to profession we each receive a different calling. We work to provide for our families and financial responsibilities as it this God's will. It is men, as heads of families, who are to provide spiritual and mental wellbeing, as well as the physical needs. But in the broader scope, we are all called to be disciples and to bear the mark of Jesus in our personal life, in the home, at work or any other situation in which we find ourselves.

Here in our passage today, we find John the Baptist's clear understanding of his purpose in life as he sought to fulfill it. His ministry was two-fold: **(1)**To call a nation to repentance, that they might turn away from their present course of direction and go in an opposite way, preparing hearts for the coming of Messiah. **(2)** Secondly to identify the Messiah and issue a call for all to follow Him. This job brought his life to a close. John the Baptist fulfilled his mission in life. Are you on the same course? To find, then finish and fulfill the purpose and meaning of your life? Or are you piddling your life away with no direction or purpose stumbling, reeling from one bad choice to another and ultimately just waiting for the end of life?

**Prop:** In Jn. 1:1-34; the Apostle John catalogued the testimony of John the Baptist as to the **I. Denial and Recognition – 1:18-28**, and then directed attention to **II. Jesus and His Ministry – 1:29-34** that we might also have our direction focused upon Jesus.

**Transition:** Let's begin our study today with John the Baptist's denial of being Messiah and recognition of the True Messiah as found in John 1:19-28.

## **I. John's Denial and Recognition – Jn. 1:19-28**

### **A. Denial (19-21)**

**1. Investigation (19)** – In the first 18 verses, John gave an introduction and claimed Jesus was the Son of God, the Creator God who took on human form through the virgin birth. He then identified John as the Witness, the Forerunner of Messiah. With this introduction, beginning in verse 19, the Apostle John began his account of the life of Jesus with the suppositional thoughts of 1:1-18 in place.

Beginning in verse 19, John the Baptist had been preaching for some time and had caused quite a stir in Jerusalem in religious circles. The ruling counsel of the Jews sent various priests and Levites to John for identification purposes. They wanted to know just who he was and his intent, as he was upsetting the balance of power.

He was stirring up the local population who were leaving the cities and villages to meet John at the River Jordan. Upon hearing the message and call to repentance they were being baptized an outward sign of a changed heart.

**2. Denial (20-21)** – The first question was concerning John’s role, **“Was he the Messiah?”** John’s answer was emphatic – **“No!”** The second question was **concerning whether he was Elijah, to which he again answered “No!”** The Jews misunderstood thinking that Elijah would be resurrected from the dead to announce the arrival of the Messiah. The prophecy of Malachi 4:5-6 specifically foretold of one who would come in the power and spirit of Elijah, which John the Baptist clearly had. The Jews then questioned John as to whether he was **“The Prophet”** (Dt. 18:15) again the answer was **“No!”** The Jewish scholars in their misunderstanding of the prophecies of Messiah had created the belief that a separate individual would come with Messiah who the Jews had simply labeled **“The Prophet.”** The identity of this Prophet was unknown. Many of the scholars of the day thought it might be Moses or some other patriarch of the Old Testament. It was unclear if even the Pharisees of this time period understood. Again John replied **“No!”**

## **B. John's Declaration (22-24)**

**1. Inquiry (22)** – In verse 22, having exhausted the possibilities, that John the Baptist was not the Messiah, nor Elijah, nor The Prophet, they asked John directly who he was as the ruling counsel of the Jews wanted to know. They could not refute the results of John's preaching and apparently they perceived John as a threat to their authority and ruling power.

**2. Clarification (23)** – In verse 23 John the Baptist quoted a prophesy of Isaiah which affirmed that John had been sent by God as: **“The ‘VOICE OF ONE CRYING IN THE WILDERNESS, MAKE STRAIGHT THE WAY OF THE LORD’...”** John's words were clear in that he had been sent by God for the purpose of being the fore-runner of the coming Messiah. His call was to repentance and the preparation of hearts to receive the Messiah, the true King of Israel and the Savior of the world.

**3. Transition (24)** – In verse 24, the Apostle John added an editorial word about these men who came at the behest of the ruling council among the Jews to investigate John and his ministry and evaluated whether he was a threat to the current rulers in power.

## **C. Question of Baptism (25-28)**

**1. Baptism of Repentance (25)** – In verse 25, part of John's message was about repentance and change of lifestyle, signified by water baptism.

I know there are some denominations that teach that water baptism is a part of the saving grace of God. That it is baptism plus grace. Such a belief runs contrary to what the Bible teaches. Water baptism has always been an outward sign of what has taken place on the inside. Here in verses 25-26, John was baptizing as a sign of one's commitment to stop living in sin and to follow the soon coming Messiah. It was an outward sign of confession of sin and preparation to follow Jesus whole heartedly.

In was no small thing what John was doing , people were coming in droves, signifying a hunger after some 400 years of religious dearth and death. The religious leaders thought that he should not be baptizing if he were not Messiah, Elijah or the Prophet. But John was not acting on his own authority but as one commissioned by God.

**2. Response of Humility (26)** – In verse 26, John responded with words of humility that what he was doing was not big deal, but, **“Among you stands One who you do not know but He is someone worth knowing.”**

**Transition: In verses 27 John spoke words of significance concerning the position and nature of the One who he was to introduce to the world.**

## **D. Nature and Position (27-28)**

**1. John the Baptist's Station** – When John came and spent the last 6 months of his life preparing the way for Messiah, he garnered great respect and honor among the people. He had been appointed and anointed from the womb for this special mission in life. He came out of the desert as a shooting star, preaching in the power of the spirit of Elijah. His message was rough and ready. He was a wild donkey of man, clothed in camel hair, a leather belt tied around his waist, hairy and kind of scary, not to mention the smell. But his message was one of hope, and people fell under the spirit of his message. He offered hope and life, freedom from sin, while the current religious establishment stood for legalistic behavior and burdensome taxes to support their lavish lifestyle. The people respected John, while the leaders in Jerusalem feared him.

**2. Jesus Is Worthy (27)** – John alluded that Jesus was present during this particular encounter. He was among the throng as it said in verse 26. John with all of his popularity and respect, did not give in to the recognition which would lead any lesser man into an attitude of importance and prominence. John in verse 27, clearly understood his position in life and the nature of the Messiah. John never lost sight of his mission in life:

**“It is He who comes after me, the thong of whose sandal I am not worthy to untie.”** As portrayed at the last supper, none of the disciples would stoop to untie another’s sandals and wash their feet; that was the role of the lowest of low servants. John didn’t consider himself worthy to do such a low task. John never lost perspective of his role in the whole eternal plan of redemption. His work was important in the service of the King, but John understood the principle; it is all about Jesus.

**Transition: Given the shortness of the week, I will stop here as I want to spend more time on the events and words of verses 29-34.**

Herein are some thoughts about purpose and meaning in life. We are born, educated, often get married, choose a career, and have a family, retire and die. That seems to be the formula of what constitutes human life. We work hard to advance our status, our income and our possessions. But at the end of life all of that is left behind for others to enjoy. Is there anything more to this life?

As believers, we have received a calling from God: First to become His child and receive the gift of eternal life. Secondly we have received a calling to share this truth with our own circle of influence, the people we rub shoulder with each and every day.

Thirdly, we have received a calling to serve one another. Fourthly, and most importantly is to love the Lord our God with all our being and then to love our neighbor as ourselves.

So as we come into a New Year when it is the traditional time to make resolutions about the coming year, how about making some resolutions about our relationship with God and others? To change the way we do life.

This morning, as is my practice, I took the long way to church. It helps me clear my mind for the day. As I was driving east on Fountain, I got lost in my train of thought. As I came to the light I almost missed the turn, but as soon as I made the turn; I realized I was on Murray, not Jetwing. At this point I had a choice. Given my lack of direction, and that it was too early to see the mountains, which are my usual point of reference, I mostly likely would have gotten lost and wandered until I found a street I recognized. I now realize I could have taken Murray to Chelton, but at the time I panicked. So I made a U-turn back to Fountain, and went east until I hit Jetwing. I saw a spiritual principle; in that often my vision or my calling often becomes clouded by life itself. I have become so caught up in life that I fail to live life in the context of my faith. So my resolution is to not let the things of this life cause me to lose sight of living life, the abundant life in

Jesus. I want To make good and wise decisions and to be obedient to the calling of God upon my life.

This morning I have blank sheets of paper here in the front pew. After the service I would challenge you to take a sheet and an envelope. Take time this week to contemplate resolutions for 2015 about changing your perspective about your faith in Christ, write down those resolutions, seal the envelope, address it to yourself and bring it back. I will then put them all in a sealed folder to be distributed in 2016 to see what progress you have made over the course of 2015.

## **“To Tell the Truth Part I – Jn. 1:19-34**

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### **I. John’s Denial and Recognition – Jn. 1:19-28**

#### **A. Denial (19-21)**

- 1. Investigation (19)**
- 2. Denial (20-21)**

#### **B. John’s Declaration (22-24)**

- 1. Inquiry (22)**
- 2. Clarification (23)**
- 3. Transition (24)**

#### **C. Question of Baptism (25-28)**

- 1. Baptism of Repentance (25)**
- 2. Response of Humility (26)**

#### **D. Nature and Position (27-28)**

- 1. John the Baptist’s Station**
- 2. Jesus Is Worthy (27)**
- 3. Transitional Phrase (28)**