

#5 – John 1:29-34

Need: To catalogue the testimony of John, both as to denial and recognition, directing all 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” – Part II

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

Intro: I no longer go to the Grace Brethren National Conference for two specific reasons. The first is the cost. The conferences are always held at an upper scale resort such as Florida or some other top vacation spot and even with our frugal food budget, plane fare and lodging, the cost was well over \$2500 for the week. Secondly, my wife can no longer go because her summer vacation has been cut shorter so she is back to work earlier than previous summer breaks. I suppose I could go on my own, but I don't feel comfortable. To be honest, generally speaking, pastors are not high on my list of people I would choose to be with for a week. When I did go, in the pastors' sessions I sat back and watched as pastors connected, bragging about the size and impact of “**their**” ministry. It was not an enjoyable time for me.

I remember one instance, flying solo without my wife at my side; a pastor came up to me, slapped me on the back and asked how I was doing.

After exchanging pleasantries, he began to speak about an incident in which we had apparently worked together a funny incident which happened during the task. The problem was I had no clue who the guy was; I had never seen him before and thus had no inkling of what he was talking about. So I let him go on until he saw another guy he wanted to talk to and he went away laughing. Sometime later in the evening the guy came back; he had realized his mistaken identification of me as one of his buddies. He apologized and we both had a laugh. We parted, never again to encounter each other.

In the message today there was no mistaken identity of whom John bore witness to. John signaled out Jesus in the crowd: “**The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!**” Even though Jesus and John knew each other on a personal level, as they were related to each other, John made no reference to any other association with Jesus other than “**The Lamb of God.**” We hear nothing in this passage about John the Baptist’s part as he was about to fulfill his role in God’s grand plan of redemption.

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

Transition: Let’s take a moment to recap.

In verses 19-28, John encountered a group of men sent from the religious counsel in Jerusalem to inquire about the ministry, message and practice of the Baptist which caused such a ruckus among the general population. John had no formal training, no professional credentials and no religious authority. Questions were posed to him about his identity: **(1)** Are you the Messiah? **(2)** Are You Elijah? – Many Jews believed Elijah would be raised from the dead to pronounce Messiah is coming. But the prophecy in Malachi 3 foretold of one who would come in the **“Power and Spirit of Elijah?”**, which was fulfilled in John the Baptist, **(3)** Are you the Prophet? – Somehow the scholars misinterpreted the prophecies concerning Messiah’s arrival, thinking that someone else would come. Nevertheless John denied the three attempts to place a label on him. When asked directly, he claimed to be **“A voice crying in the wilderness, make straight the way of the Lord.”** Not satisfied with John’s responses, the investigators were somewhat perplexed about what to do next, until John dropped a bombshell in verses 29-34!

II. Jesus and His Ministry – Jn. 1:29-34

A. Scenario (28)

1. Transitional Phrase (28) – John did all his preaching along the wilderness side of the Jordan River. He came out of the desert and remained in outlying areas, simply because of the size of the crowds. He and his disciples baptized people who were struck with remorse for their sin and wanted to be recognized as willing to make a change in their life. To bear public witness of this decision, they were baptized.

2. Religious Encounter – We just went over the religious delegation from Jerusalem, but in verse 29 the second scenario took place as to whether the delegation was still present is unknown at this time. In my research there was a long article about the timeline, but it is not relevant here. However, I would that they were still hanging around as of yet they had nothing to report to their superiors.

B. Identification of Messiah (1:29-34)

1. Lamb of God (29a) – In verse 29 John introduced Messiah with a loaded term, “**Lamb of God.**” The label reflected the central issue, the sacrificial nature of Messiah’s mission. It was a reference to the one final sacrifice to remove the penalty, the guilt of our sins and open the way to God. In the OT sacrificial system, once a year a lamb was offered for the sin of the nation.

The blood from that sacrifice was to be sprinkled on the Ark of the Covenant which resided in the holy of holies in the temple, between the two angels, a place that was called the mercy seat. Jesus was to be that lamb not just to cover our sins as was the nature of the OT sacrifice, but to wash away, to cleanse and remove as **“Far as the East was from the West.”** It was an act played out in the next statement of John – **“Who takes away the sin of the world.”**

2. “Sin of the World” (29b) – In that one statement John not only classified who Jesus was, but also the nature of His mission. Jesus was born to die for the sin of the world, for all those who call upon the name of Jesus, proclaiming Him as Lord and Savior. The penalty of sin was paid at the Cross.

Transition: John the Baptist continued on in his description of Jesus as to His divine nature.

3. Divine Nature (30) – In verse 30, John the Baptist mentioned Messiah’s nature as God. In this statement John began to decentralize his own status by defining Jesus as greater, more important and essential to God’s plan of redemption.

After high school, with no ambition, I attended the local Junior College. I was sitting in my English literary class when the instructor began to pontificate about the great works of English literary excellence. In the list, one of her choices was the King James Version (KJV) of the Bible. She expounded on the language style, the use of graceful phrasing and so on, but then made the point that it was just a collection stories, with no basis in fact. It was fantasy for the purpose of teaching moral truth, kind of like Aesop's Fables. I had heard that before, but what really sent my mind reeling was when she said that it was Jesus' disciples who deified Him as God; He was just a man who was the product of an illicit relationship between Mary and Joseph. He was a great man because He was willing to die for a great cause, world peace.

But here in verse 30 John clearly identified who Messiah was, God in human form and he clarified that this Man was of eternally higher rank than John. God the Son had no beginning and no end; He was eternal in nature and scope.

4. Identity Revealed (30-32) – In verse 30, John mentioned the mission of the Messiah and His very nature as God. But there was a period of time where John didn't know His identity. He knew Jesus as his cousin, but as to

His true nature, he didn't realize who Messiah was. But through his continual baptismal work, John knew eventually Messiah would be revealed. Then in verse 32, it all came to together as John witnessed the Spirit of God descending upon Him like a dove out of heaven. At that point in time John knew Jesus was the Man.

5. Summation (33-34) – In verse 33, John gave a brief summation of his experience and conclusion. At the beginning of his ministry he knew Messiah was to come, but had no real clue as to his identity. Through his ministry of baptism, Messiah was revealed and confirmed by the coming presence of the Holy Spirit upon Him. John's baptism was of water, but Jesus would baptize believers with the Holy Spirit, which is the Agent by which people are saved. Prior to Jesus' leaving for heaven after the resurrection, He promised the coming of the "**Comforter,**" the Holy Spirit of God. He would enter the heart of each and every believer and effect the transformation from death to eternal life. He would serve as a Guide and Revealer of Truth. This baptism of the Holy Spirit takes place at the instant one trusts Jesus as Lord and Savior.

John knew this to be true because he witnessed the coming of the Holy Spirit upon Jesus which led him to conclude that Jesus was indeed the Son of God.

As I contemplate this passage I never cease to be amazed and grateful that God would become a man and live in this world as one of us. Jesus has come into the world, He lived and died and rose again from the dead so that I would no longer be crushed under the load and penalty of sin.

Secondly He has sent the Holy Spirit to live inside of me and produce eternal life, a personal relationship with God. He has brought back to life that which was dead within me. With the sin question settled, I can come **“boldly”** before the Throne of God recognized as His son!

Those truths are bulwarks of the faith, in that God loved me so much, He sent His own Son to die for me and through His resurrection give me eternal life. Death becomes a gateway to an eternity with God. At first glance, eternity is a long time. But it will not be enough to search and experience the infinite and unfathomable depths of God. There will be no barrier between God and I mentally, physically or spiritually, as all will be healed. So is heaven scary? In a sense it will be for me, because all will be new and the familiar sin and failure in this life will be gone. Finally, in God’s presence, I will be able to do what I was designed to do: to love, worship and serve God.

“To Tell the Truth Part II – Jn. 1:29-34

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- 1. Transitional Phrase (28)**
- 2. Religious Encounter**

B. Identification of Messiah (1:29-34)

- 1. Lamb of God (29a)**
- 2. “Sin of the World” (29b)**
- 3. Divine Nature (30)**
- 4. Identity Revealed (30-32)**
- 5. Summation (33-34)**