

JOHN 1:29-34
JOHN THE BAPTIST'S TESTIMONY!

Please turn in your Bibles this morning to John chapter 1 as we continue our in-depth study of the Gospel of John.

We have been looking at John the Baptist who was ministering on the east side of the Jordan River, just above the Dead Sea, in an area called Bethabara or Bethany. Again, this area was on the east side of the Jordan River.

And in our last study we saw how John witnessed to the Pharisees and Sadducees about who he is!

You see, the Jewish religious leaders in Jerusalem sent out these men to see what was going on with this man known as John the Baptist.

What was all the commotion about? Why were they so interested in what John was doing?

I think one of the reasons was they were jealous of him. You see, John the Baptist had a huge following coming out to see him and learn from him and repent of their sins. He was preparing the way for the Messiah.

And the reason I can say with such certainty that he had a big following is because of what Matthew tells us.

In Matthew 3:4-6 we are told, **“Now John himself was clothed in camel’s hair, with a leather belt around his waist; and his food was locusts and wild honey. Then Jerusalem, all Judea, and all the region around the Jordan went out to him and were baptized by him in the Jordan, confessing their sins.”**

John the Baptist did not look like any of the religious leaders. He did not get trained at Old Rabbi University. He had no qualifications to do what he was doing. And now he has people coming from Jerusalem, from all of Judea, and from the area around the Jordan River.

And they not only came out to see John the Baptist, but the message he gave to them changed them. They wanted to draw close to God, so they repented of their sins and were baptized.

On the other end of the spectrum were these religious leaders who wanted information so they could report back to the religious leaders in Jerusalem. They were not interested in hearing about repenting and being baptized.

They were holy men of God, or so they thought. And they could not imagine how this hippie freak could have a following like he did. And, of course, they did not!

So they were not interested in changing but just finding fault in John the Baptist and try to control this guy, who, in reality, was just pointing people to the living God!

That is why John went on to say in Matthew, **“But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to his baptism, he said to them, ‘Brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Therefore bear fruits worthy of repentance, and do not think to say to yourselves, “We have Abraham as our father.” For I say to you that God is able to raise up children to Abraham from these stones. And even now the ax is laid to the root of the trees. Therefore every tree which does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance, but He who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. His winnowing fan is in His hand, and He will thoroughly clean out His threshing floor, and gather His wheat into the barn; but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.”** Matthew 3:7-12.

John lays it all out and says that just because you are a descendant of Abraham it won't save you. You need to repent and get right with God. The information was there for them, they just refused to apply it to their lives.

And that is true for every single person on this planet. They have the information to be saved and then it is up to them to receive it, but it is their choice!

And what John does is he takes the attention off of himself and he points to the One who is worthy for that attention, and that is Jesus!

As we get to our study this morning we are going to move on to the next day, day two and the encounter that John the Baptist has with Jesus!

I have called our study – ***JOHN THE BAPTIST'S TESTIMONY!***

And, like I have said, he is going to be testifying of Jesus, who He is!

The problem today is many deny the existence of God. Or they think that you just can't know God. Or they make up a God out of the imagination of their own heart. Again, this is what they think in spite of the evidence that is out there.

Let me share this with you and you will see what I mean. We are told,

Have you not heard of the madman who lit a lamp in the bright morning and went to the marketplace crying ceaselessly, "I seek God! I seek God!"

There were many among those standing there who didn't believe in God, so he made them laugh.

"Is God lost?" one of them said.

"Has he gone astray like a child?" said another.

The man sprang into their midst and looked daggers at them. "Where is God?" he cried. "I will tell you. We have killed him – you and I we are all his killers! But how have we done this? How could we swallow up the sea? Who gave us the sponge to wipe away the horizon? What will we do as the earth is set loose from its sun?" Friedrich Nietzsche, 1889.

Nietzsche's point was not that God does not exist, but that God has become irrelevant.

Men and women may assert that God exists or that He does not, but it makes little difference either way. God is dead not because He doesn't exist, but because we live, play, procreate, govern, and die as though He doesn't.

- C. Colson, *Kingdoms in Conflict*, p. 181

How true that is. For these Jewish religious leaders, God existed in their minds as what they wanted to believe and not what was true. So they lived their lives in a way that showed that God does not exist.

But for those who are seeking God, He will reveal Himself to them.

We see that here with the people who came to hear John, their lives were touched by God and it was evident that God touched their lives as they repented and were baptized.

Remember what John said in John 1:12-13, **“But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name: who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.”**

As I have said, the title of our study is - ***JOHN THE BAPTIST’S TESTIMONY!***

And I have broken down the verses we will be looking at into three main points. They are,

THE SAVIOR – JOHN 1:29

THE WITNESS OF BAPTISM – JOHN 1:30-33

THE EVIDENCE TESTIFIES – JOHN 1:34

So with that as our introduction, let’s begin reading in John chapter 1, beginning in verse 29, and let’s see what the Lord has for us as we study His Word.

JOHN 1

VERSE 29

Let me give you the picture of what is going on here because many miss it, or they are confused of the progression of these events.

Many read what is spoken of here and they feel that this took place immediately after Jesus’ baptism. But that was not the case. And I can see how there can be confusion.

You see, when it says, “**The next day John saw Jesus coming . . .**” it was after John baptized Jesus, and after the forty days of temptation in the wilderness.

How can I be so sure?

Because, as you look at what John tells us in John 1:30-33 you can clearly see that as John speaks of the baptism of Jesus, it is a past event.

And if that is true, that would mean that those forty days that Jesus was in the wilderness also took place.

Again, some may wonder how I can be so sure. The reason is simple. That is what the Scriptures tell us.

In Matthew chapters 3 and 4 we are told of these two events. Matthew put it like this beginning in Matthew 3:16, “**When He had been baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened to Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting upon Him. And suddenly a voice came from heaven, saying, ‘This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.’ Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. And when He had fasted forty days and forty nights, afterward He was hungry.**” (Matthew 3:16-17, 4:1-2)

I hope that makes sense to you. Jesus has already been baptized by John, those forty days in the wilderness are over and once again we see that John the Baptist has this encounter with Jesus.

And as you read what is taking place here in John chapter 1, I believe this occurred a day after the events of what transpired in John 1:19-28, after John’s interview with the religious leaders from Jerusalem that we read of.

So this would be the second day that these events took place.

And we see this played out some 4 times here in John chapters 1 and 2. That idea of the “**next day**” really introduces to us a sequence of days that continue in verses 35, 43 and John 2:1.

Bruce tells us, “*Some weeks probably had elapsed since Jesus received baptism at John’s hands; he had been away since then, but now he is back, and John draws the crowd’s attention to him.*”

Absolutely and it was after those forty days in the wilderness that these events took place.

And Alford makes this same point, “*Since then verse 29 must be understood as happening after the baptism, it must have happened after the Temptation also. And in this supposition, there is not the slightest difficulty.*”

So just keep that in mind, that this event here in John 1:29 was after His baptism by John, after He was in the wilderness for those forty days, and after the meeting John had with the Jewish religious leaders about who John was.

And as John sees Jesus coming notice what he says of Jesus, “**. . . Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!**” John 1:29.

Notice that John did not present Jesus as a great teacher or an example of how we are to live, or a really nice guy. You get the picture.

That is what many are saying today, and they are wrong. Not because I am saying that, but because the Word of God is saying it!

Let me show you what I mean. We are told from an article in 2020,

Although most Christians believe that Jesus Christ is their Lord and Savior and He is God, there are some groups that say otherwise. These groups argue that Christ is not God, rather, merely a moral teacher. A recent poll shockingly reveals that many Christians do not believe Jesus was God at all.

A majority of Americans and nearly *a third of evangelicals say Jesus was a “good teacher” but was not God*, according to a new survey for Ligonier Ministries that was conducted by LifeWay Research.

They acknowledge that Jesus was a good teacher and a very moral one who paved the way for a revolution during the time where immorality was rampant, but that’s it.

Let us try to understand their views as well as try to understand the difference between merely a moral teacher as compared to the true nature of Jesus.

For a person to be a moral teacher, he must have the following traits: Honesty, enthusiasm or avidity, ambition, and hard work, curiosity, and a sense of responsibility. Jesus has all these qualities, which makes Him, indeed, a moral teacher.

- <https://bit.ly/3ezXSfZ>

I hope you are shocked by the number of Evangelical Christians who consider Jesus as just a good moral teacher, 33% feel that way!

Are these people even saved?

Now some may think I am being too harsh on them, but if you reject Jesus as Almighty God, if you see Him just as a good moral teacher, then you are not saved. I am not saying that, but Jesus clearly says that in John 8:24, **“Therefore I said to you that you will die in your sins; for if you do not believe that I am [He], you will die in your sins.”**

Keep in mind that the word *“He”* was added for clarity. It should read, **“Therefore I said to you that you will die in your sins; for if you do not believe that I am, you will die in your sins.”**

In other words, Jesus is saying that if you do not believe that He is Almighty God, the Great I Am, the voice from the burning bush in Genesis, you will die in your sins! I think that is clear.

And if it is not clear, The Living Bible puts John 8:24 like this, **“That is why I said that you will die in your sins; for unless you believe that I am the Messiah, the Son of God, you will die in your sins.”**

Now in that article, I do disagree with what they say regarding Jesus being a good moral teacher because He was honest!

I know, some of you are getting uncomfortable with that statement. But hear me out.

If it is true, that Jesus is just a good moral teacher and not God, then He is not a good moral teacher because He was not honest, He lied, he was deceptive in what He said!

The reason I say that is we see over and over in the Gospel of John, and not just here, that Jesus is claiming to be Almighty God and it is what makes these Jewish religious leaders crazy. That He being a man makes Himself equal with God!

So here is what it all comes down to. Either Jesus is the Son of God, Almighty God who came to save man from his sin or He is a horrible, unreliable teacher! Those are the only two options we really have, or He was just plain crazy!

But, as we will see in our study of the Gospel of John, like I have said, Jesus over and over said that He was Almighty God and that is what drove the Jewish religious leaders crazy. That He being a man claimed to be equal with God, and He was and is! I know, I have repeated that but it is that important that we understand this.

C. S. Lewis makes this point as he wrote,

I am trying here to prevent anyone saying the really foolish thing that people often say about Him: I'm ready to accept Jesus as a great moral teacher, but I don't accept his claim to be God. That is the one thing we must not say.

A man who was merely a man and said the sort of things Jesus said would not be a great moral teacher. He would either be a lunatic - on the level with the man who says he is a poached egg - or else he would be the Devil of Hell.

You must make your choice. Either this man was, and is, the Son of God, or else a madman or something worse.

You can shut him up for a fool, you can spit at him and kill him as a demon or you can fall at his feet and call him Lord and God, but let us not come with any patronizing nonsense about his being a great human teacher. He has not left that open to us. He did not intend to.

- C. S. Lewis, Mere Christianity

Absolutely and the point that John the Baptist makes here is so important because no man, no sacrifice could ever, ever take away our sins. But Jesus can and has done that because He is Almighty God who became flesh in the Incarnation and died on the cross of Calvary to pay in full the penalty for our sins!

One writer put it like this, *“He used ‘the lamb’ as the symbol of sacrifice in general. Here, he says, is the reality of which all animal sacrifice was the symbol.”* (Dods)

Again, some may read these words of John and not think much of it, but it is a powerful statement regarding who Jesus is, the work He came to fulfill, His destiny you might say.

You see, John’s statement is speaking of Jesus being the Sacrificial Lamb, the One who not only will pay the penalty for our sins, but completely take them away.

And please note that it does not say *“sins”* in the plural, but *“sin”* in the singular. Why is that?

I think the idea here is that the entire sins of humanity were collected into one and placed upon Jesus. So it is the sins of the world, all of them, past, present and future that were placed upon Jesus as one!

And we see that the Lamb of God has come to take away the sin of the righteous, right?

No, it does not say that.

The reason being is that none are righteous, not even one!

I am not saying that people don’t make themselves out to be righteous or feel that they are righteous, but they are not. The standard is perfection, and all miss the mark. The only one to fulfill the Law completely, who was without sin, was Jesus!

He has come to take away the sins of the **WORLD!** That means that Jesus Christ did not come to save or forgive the sins of the select few, but of every single person on this planet!

As Trench put it, *“He will give Himself as the expiatory Sacrifice not only of the sins of His people, but of the germ of all sin in Adam’s descendants, the sin of the world, the apostasy in Eden: thus wide and deep is the Baptist’s vision.”* (Trench)

And as amazing as that is, it gets even more amazing as John tells us that the Lamb of God will not cover our sin, but He will take it away!

And that verb AIRO, (ah'-ee-ro) in the Greek, **“takes away”** has the idea of taking something up and carrying it away to destroy it. It is as Peter tells us in I Peter 2:24, **“who Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, having died to sins, might live for righteousness - by whose stripes you were healed.”**

We also see this in Psalm 103:2 says, **“As far as the east is from the west, So far has He removed our transgressions from us.”**

And then in Isaiah 43:25 we are told, **“I, even I, am He who blots out your transgressions for My own sake; And I will not remember your sins.”**

And what I want you to see here is that the word **“sin”** is singular, not plural or **“sins.”** I know, I have said that but again, keep in mind that it was the sin of the world, all of them that were placed upon Jesus, not just for a select few.

And today, we have people putting down the work that Jesus did. That Jesus did not come to save us from our sins but to save us from ourselves, whatever that means. But that is not at all what John the Baptist is saying here.

Listen to what Peter says in I Peter 1:18-21, **“knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold, from your aimless conduct received by tradition from your fathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot. He indeed was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you who through Him believe in God, who raised Him from the dead and gave Him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God.”**

You see, our salvation is not built upon good works or riches but upon the work of Jesus on the cross of Calvary and His resurrection from the dead!

Jesus did not come to free me from this problem or that problem but to set me free from the bondage that sin had me in and He restored my fellowship, your fellowship with God the Father through the shedding of His blood that cleanses us from all sin!

Now we read this, that Jesus is the Lamb of God who came to take away our sins, and it is not much of a problem for us.

But think about the Jews and what they were hearing. You see, the blood of bulls and goats could never take away your sins, they only covered your sin until you sinned again!

Listen to what Paul said about the shed blood of these sacrificial animals and the shed blood of the Lamb of God.

In Hebrews 9:11-15 he wrote, **“But Christ came as High Priest of the good things to come, with the greater and more perfect tabernacle not made with hands, that is, not of this creation. Not with the blood of goats and calves, but with His own blood He entered the Most Holy Place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption. For if the blood of bulls and goats and the ashes of a heifer, sprinkling the unclean, sanctifies for the purifying of the flesh, how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God? And for this reason He is the Mediator of the new covenant, by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions under the first covenant, that those who are called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance.”**

Our sins were paid in full, cast as far as the east is from the west to be remembered no more. In fact, there is no record of any of your sins; past, present or future! And thus, as Paul wrote, that we have obtained eternal redemption. That could never happen with the shed blood of animals but with the shed blood of Christ, He has paid in full the penalty for our sins!

And think about this for a minute. For Jesus to be that perfect sacrifice He had to be without inherited sin, a blemish; and without acquired sin, a spot; and He was. That is what Peter is saying to us and it is what Paul is telling us in Hebrews 4:15, which says **“For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin.”**

Thus, Jesus was our perfect sacrifice, able to pay in full the penalty for our sins as the sins of the world were placed upon Him, He made atonement for us, as Isaiah 53:6 tells us, **“All we like sheep have gone astray; We have turned, every one, to his own way; And the LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.”**

And maybe that is what John the Baptist was thinking about when he saw Jesus, what Isaiah spoke of. And thus, John's words are a powerful statement pointing to the destiny of Jesus, the shadow of the cross is seen as His ministry begins!

Let me sum this section up like this. We are told,

In one sentence we have the essence of the Christian message. It is difficult for Western ears to appreciate the power of John's announcement, but these words brought an avalanche of meaning to the Jews' minds.

A few years ago, while I was on a speaking engagement in San Diego, I decided to visit the Timkin Art Museum.

I had heard they had an El Greco painting of *St. Peter Holding the Keys to the Kingdom*.

I paid my money, walked into the museum, found the painting, and looked at the El Greco in admiration.

Then I turned around. On the opposite wall was a small, walnut-colored painting – very ancient – 1525.

As I looked closely, I saw it was a lamb almost photographically rendered. Around the lamb's head, barely perceptible, was a halo.

As I looked more intently, I saw that the lamb's legs were tied and that the animal, shrouded by the dark background, was laying on a cross.

The title was *Agnus Dei*, Latin for "Lamb of God."

I wanted to weep. I stood there and looked at that picture for a long time. It was not just the beauty that held me, but the theology of the Atonement. John the Baptist's words kept running circles in my heart!

Exactly! “... **Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!**” John 1:29. The Savior has come to set us free from our sins and the bondage of sin that we are in – ***THE SAVIOR!***

VERSES 30-33

Now when you think about all the attention that John the Baptist was getting. When you look at the numbers of people that were traveling from Jerusalem, all over Judah and the area around the Jordan River, he was a popular guy to say the least!

And yet, John the Baptist did not let that go to his head. He said in John 1:30 that Jesus was preferred or ranked higher than he was.

That is humility.

But today, humility is a badge worn with honor! Sorry, sarcasm there. If you need a badge to tell people you are humble, that is not humility. We don't need no stinking badges! Sorry.

But listen to this from John Cooper, he is the lead singer for Skillet, a Christian music group, and this is what he wrote back in 2020,

Pastors shouldn't be rock stars. Yeah I said it. A rock star promotes himself, builds his brand, and entertains people. It's his job.

A pastor is supposed to lay his life down for his sheep. He serves, he protects, and he equips the saints for the work of ministry (Ephesians 4:11-12).

So why does it seem like many of our celebrity pastors are obsessively self-promoting, building their own brands, and protecting themselves by never preaching or teaching anything that would put them in Twitter prison?

Yes, it's sad and devastating to watch our leaders fall into sin, but when the foundation is built so poorly it shouldn't be all that surprising.

Many Christians have been saying this for years and its past time that I join them: I'm tired of celebrity pastors. Pastors aren't supposed to be cool. They're not supposed to be fashion trend setters. We are ALL called to decrease, that Christ would increase both in our hearts and in our lives (John 3:30).

HIS fame should be known, not OURS. Celebrity Pastors, get out of the way! You're hogging the spotlight by making yourself the story.

Instead, you should be taking some hits on the front lines by stating clearly what God commands. Celebrity pastors seldom do this. Instead, most of what we hear is rhetorical gobbledygook, veiled mysticism, and repackaged new-age movement self-help promotional material disguised as the work of the Spirit.

My pastor helped change my life in college. "Really, who?"

Exactly.

He remains faceless, nameless, and will never get the adoration of the world because his desire was for Jesus to have all of the glory. He taught me how to read and understand the Bible. He took my midnight phone calls, he instigated the necessary but uncomfortable conversations, he taught me the importance of sexual purity, and he even taught me how to paint a house and balance a checkbook.

It almost sounds more like being a father, doesn't it? Working, serving, teaching your kids and never expecting a "thank you" or a hand clap is what pastoring is all about.

Pastors, I am thankful for you. Many are serving faithfully and you will be rewarded by God.

But for the pastors who are receiving their reward on earth, I have a request for you: please stop looking for adoration from the world. We don't need you to look "awesome", we need you to be fearless and preach the gospel according to the unchanging, authoritative Word of God. Stop finding clever ways to evade questions. You know the ones - God's commands about sexual morality, God's authority structure in the Church and at home, God's righteousness that demands punishment of sin. Answer them. And answer them clearly for heaven's sake.

Please stop trying to find new ways to explain the perceived inconvenient truths of God's Word. You ought to love what He loves and hate what he hates. This used to be a prerequisite for church leadership. Today, its deemed radical and even bigoted.

Play time is over. The battle is raging, and the field is full of wimps and boys who have never picked up a sword because it just "feels mean."

We need generals and leaders who don't care about their brand, their look, their "likes" or making allegiances with the world. In short, it's time to make pastors uncool again.

- <https://bit.ly/3biShbT>

Amen to that. If we are lifting ourselves up, then we are wrong and we need to repent and get right with God.

We are to die to self, and we are to let Christ be seen in us. Less of me and more of Him. Remember what John the Baptist said in John 3:30, "**He must increase, but I must decrease.**" Absolutely!

Let me also share this with you. We are told,

One evening the great conductor Arturo Toscanini conducted Beethoven's *Ninth Symphony*.

It was a brilliant performance, at the end of which the audience went absolutely wild!

They clapped, whistled, and stamped their feet, absolutely caught up in the greatness of that performance.

As Toscanini stood there, he bowed and bowed and bowed, then acknowledged his orchestra.

When the ovation finally began to subside, Toscanini turned and looked intently at his musicians. He was almost out of control as he whispered, "Gentlemen! Gentlemen!"

The orchestra leaned forward to listen.

In a fiercely enunciated whisper Toscanini said, "Gentlemen, I am nothing."

That was an extraordinary admission since Toscanini was blessed with an enormous ego.

He added, "Gentlemen, you are nothing."

They had heard that same message before the rehearsal.

"But Beethoven," said Toscanini in a tone of adoration, "is everything, everything, everything!"

This is the attitude we need toward ourselves and toward the Lord Jesus Christ. I am nothing, you are nothing, but he is everything!

That was John's attitude, and it is the attitude of every authentic messenger of Christ.

- R. Kent Hughes, John – That You May Believe, p. 44

And think about it. Do you really think if something happened to us, if we could not do what we have been called to do, that God would be in trouble? Absolutely not.

When Moses died, Joshua took over and God did not miss a beat because He is God and He is in control!

God uses us not because we are so great, but because He is so great.

Apart from Him in our lives we could do nothing, nothing worthy that would bless Him, that would honor Him.

All that we do, all that I do is not because we or I am so special, it is because the Lord has given us the gifts and all we do is walk by faith and see what He will do in us and through us as we serve Him! May we never forget that. He is the One we want others to see, not us!

Now this is also interesting to me because John the Baptist in speaking of Jesus, he tells us, “**... He was before me.**” John 1:30.

When you look at what the Bible says you may easily wonder how that can be since John the Baptist was about six months older than Jesus, and yet, John speaks of Jesus being before him!

Again, how can that be? How could Jesus be before John?

When John speaks of Jesus being before him, he is not speaking of Jesus' physical birth. He is speaking of the eternal existence of Jesus, that Jesus existed before He became flesh and blood and dwelt among us, and thus, He is God! And John will expound on that point in John 1:34!

So this Lamb of God, Almighty God has become flesh and dwelt among us so that He can take away the sins of the world! But how could John be so sure that Jesus is the One, that He is the Messiah?

Because God gave John the Baptist a sign that the One you see the Holy Spirit descend upon like a dove is the Messiah.

Does Jesus fit the picture? Is He the Messiah?

Again, we don't have to guess, we can just let the Scriptures speak for themselves.

We are told in Matthew 3:16-17 as John was baptizing Jesus, **“When He had been baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened to Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting upon Him. And suddenly a voice came from heaven, saying, ‘This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.’”**

Keep in mind that I have called these verses – ***THE WITNESS OF BAPTISM!***

And here when Jesus was baptized in the Jordan River God gave John a sign that this is the One. We are not told of anyone else seeing this sign, only John and it was to confirm in his heart that Jesus is the Messiah!

This makes John a reliable witness of who Jesus is because he had that confirming evidence from God and John now takes all that He knows and has seen and is giving us his testimony, his witness of Jesus. And we will deal with this more in a few minutes as we get to our last point.

I also want you to notice that John the Baptist did not know that Jesus was the Messiah before this baptism.

Look at John 1:31 again. We are told, **“I did not know Him . . .”**

Also, in John 1:33 we are told, **“I did not know Him, but He who sent me to baptize with water said to me, ‘Upon whom you see the Spirit descending, and remaining on Him, this is He who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.’”**

That is interesting since they were cousins and yet, John the Baptist did not know that His cousin, Jesus, was the Messiah, not until after Jesus was baptized!

THE WITNESS OF THE BAPTISM showed John that Jesus is the One and for us, it is the witness of the Word of God opened up to us by the Spirit of God that shows us who Jesus is and who we are. He shows us our need for Him!

And look at what conclusion John comes to as we read on.

VERSE 34

As I have said, this last point is really simple – *THE EVIDENCE TESTIFIES!*

John the Baptist recognized Jesus as the Messiah, the Lamb of God who came to take away the sins of the world.

And the reason he could speak with such authority, such confidence was because God the Father testified to John at the baptism of Jesus that He is the One!

And because of that he is testifying that Jesus is the – *SON OF GOD!*

If you have seen Jesus, you have seen the Father is what Jesus said to Philip because Jesus perfectly declares the nature and the personality of God the Father because Jesus is God!
(John 14:9)

Let me share this verse with you once again here in John 1:34 and then we will deal with the controversy or why some have a problem with Jesus being God because of what John has said.

We are told these words, “**And I have seen and testified that this is the Son of God.**”

John 1:34.

And here is the problem. As some see that phrase, “**Son of God**” they feel that Jesus is not Almighty God, that He is a lesser God.

Cults will use that to say that Jesus is not God, but just a Son of God, a creation of God. That is not what the text is saying, not even close.

Listen to this and you will see what I mean.

We are told regarding this Messianic title of Jesus, the “**Son of God**”,

While it was a messianic title, it meant more than that. The Hebraism “son of” meant “of the same nature and character.” To call someone “the Son of God” was to recognize the nature and character of God in that person.

- Elmer Towns, The Gospel of John, p. 12

Also, we are told that, “In naming Him ‘The Son of God,’ the Baptist speaks with unclouded vision: he means nothing less than the full Christian doctrine that the Man Jesus is also the eternal Son of the eternal Father, co-equal, co-eternal.” (Trench)

And this is so important for us to understand because there are so many out there that try to deny the deity of Jesus and to prove them wrong you just need to read the Gospel of John because that is John’s whole point, that Jesus is Almighty God!

Let me share this with you. We are told,

Jesus is not God’s Son in the sense of a human father and a son. God did not get married and have a son. God did not mate with Mary and, together with her, produce a son.

Jesus is God’s Son in the sense that He is God made manifest in human form (John 1:1, 14).

Jesus is God's Son in that He was conceived in Mary by the Holy Spirit. Luke 1:35 declares, "The angel answered, 'The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God.'"

During His trial before the Jewish leaders, the High Priest demanded of Jesus, "I charge you under oath by the living God: Tell us if you are the Christ, the Son of God" (Matthew 26:63).

"'Yes, it is as you say,' Jesus replied. 'But I say to all of you: In the future you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Mighty One and coming on the clouds of heaven'" (Matthew 26:64).

The Jewish leaders responded by accusing Jesus of blasphemy (Matthew 26:65-66).

Later, before Pontius Pilate, "The Jews insisted, 'We have a law, and according to that law He must die, because He claimed to be the Son of God'" (John 19:7).

Why would His claiming to be the Son of God be considered blasphemy and be worthy of a death sentence?

The Jewish leaders understood exactly what Jesus meant by the phrase "Son of God." To be the Son of God is to be of the same nature as God.

The Son of God is "of God."

The claim to be of the same nature as God - to in fact be God - was blasphemy to the Jewish leaders; therefore, they demanded Jesus' death, in keeping with Leviticus 24:15.

Hebrews 1:3 expresses this very clearly, "The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of His being."

Another example can be found in John 17:12 where Judas is described as the “son of perdition.” John 6:71 tells us that Judas was the son of Simon. What does John 17:12 mean by describing Judas as the “son of perdition”? The word perdition means “destruction, ruin, waste.”

Judas was not the literal son of “ruin, destruction, and waste,” but those things were the identity of Judas’ life. Judas was a manifestation of perdition.

In this same way, Jesus is the Son of God. The Son of God is God. Jesus is God made manifest (John 1:1, 14).

- <https://bit.ly/3bhF4Qo>

When we started out our study in John remember what he wrote, what he wanted us to understand. In fact, that is the whole point of John 1:1-18, that Jesus is God. This is how John opened up his Gospel, **“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made.”**

John makes it very clear that the Word was with God, face to face with God because He is God. He is eternal, He was in the beginning with God the Father and He made all things. So I think that is clear and if it is true, and it is, why would the phrase **“Son of God”** mean that Jesus is not God? That would make no sense.

Again, remember, that is why John wrote this Gospel, that you may believe that Jesus is Almighty God who has paid our debt of sin on the cross of Calvary so that we could enter into eternal life with Him!

And, as I have said, Jesus was an exact representation of the Father as Jesus said, **“... If you have seen Me you have seen the Father...”** John 14:9.

So John the Baptist was a witness of Christ, of the Messiah. And witnesses are not neutral, they are committed to the truth of their testimony, or they are unreliable witnesses.

John was a reliable witness and knew who Jesus was, because of what he saw with his own eyes.

Make no mistake about it, our testimony is important and if we are following the Lord, what people will see is the Lord working in us and through us.

I will close with this example from Johnny Cash. We are told,

In his autobiography, Johnny Cash tells the story of his older brother Jack, who was only 14 when he died.

Jack worked at the high school agriculture shop, where he had a job cutting oak trees into fence posts. The money he earned helped support their family, which was struggling to survive by working in the cotton fields of rural Arkansas. A terrible accident occurred one day. A table saw severely cut Jack, resulting in his death a few days later.

Sometime before his death, Jack had announced to his family and the community that he intended to be a preacher. Everyone agreed he would make a fine preacher, for his strong Christian character was already well known.

Johnny Cash looked up to his older brother, and Jack's example still influences him to this day.

Cash writes, “Jack isn’t really gone, anyway, any more than anyone is. For one thing, his influence on me is profound. When we were kids, he tried to turn me from the way of death to the way of life, to steer me toward the light, and since he died his words and his example have been like signposts for me. The most important question in many of the conundrums and crises of my life has been, ‘Which is Jack’s way? Which direction would he have taken?’ I haven’t always gone that way, of course, but at least I’ve known where it was.”

- Perfect Illustrations for Every Topic and Occasion

We have come to know our Savior, Jesus Christ.

We have the witness of the Word of God and the Holy Spirit showing us more and more of Jesus.

We have the evidence and now we need to testify what Jesus has done in our hearts and lives. We need to let people see our testimony and we need to leave that testimony of Christ wherever we go as John the Baptist did!