

Who is Jesus of Nazareth?

John 5:30-47

There are four areas of testimony concerning the Lord Jesus Christ in this passage. In verses 30-35, the Lord refers to the testimony of John the Baptist. "You sent to John, and he has borne witness to the truth." What was this particular testimony of John?

John spoke of the unique worthiness of the Lord Jesus. When asked about his own identity John had said, "I baptize with water, but among you stands one you do not know, even he who comes after me, the strap of whose sandal I am not worthy to untie."

John had also called Jesus the Lamb of God. Jesus of Nazareth would be the sacrifice that would bring to fulfillment all the sacrifices of the Old Testament era. He, as the only one worthy of such a role, would die in the place of his people securing their pardon, not for another year as on the Day of Atonement, but for all eternity.

John had spoken of Christ's preexistence as well. He had been in the beginning with God, and all things were created by him. His life had not begun with conception here on the earth. His divine conception and virgin birth brought him into the world, but he was from eternity.

John had spoken of Christ as the one who baptized with the Spirit of God. He would die on the cross and then, by this unseen work of the spirit, he would build a church that would include the saved of all the ages.

And, John had called him the Son of God. This sonship was unique as well. We become the sons and daughters of God by faith in Christ. But he was always the begotten of the Father.

In verse 36, the Lord mentions a greater testimony. It is the testimony of his works. He is the son of God, not by grace, but because of who he is, the same yesterday, today, and forever, and because of what he has done. He deserves the title Son of God. He brought all things into existence, he sustains all things, and he came into his creation in order to die in the place of undeserving sinners. There is no greater work than that. He as our priest, prophet, and king, has offered himself as the perfect sacrifice for sins, has spoken the word of God perfectly and revealed himself to be that Word of God, and he has established the kingdom of God in perfection by his perfect obedience, even to accepting death on the cross.

There is also the testimony of the Father. His testimony is given by the Spirit in our experience. The love of God, which is ours in Christ, is active in us as we love one another. We have not literally heard his voice or seen him, but we see his love manifested in Christ and through us to others. It is by this that we are able to know that we are of the truth (1 John 3:19-20) and take encouragement concerning our souls and their state before God.

Even though we see Christ revealed in the love that he works in us, we also have a testimony outside ourselves. It is the testimony of the scriptures. This has been given through prophets of old, through men inspired by the Holy Spirit to write the word of God. We have been given a precious collection of books, the Bible, which points us to Christ from Genesis to Revelation. The Lord told his detractors, "You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is they that bear witness about me, yet you refuse to come to me that you may have life."

This testimony of the Scriptures keeps us from subjective error, from constructing a "Christ" who is not the real thing. If human beings regard themselves and their

experience as the source of truth concerning the person and work of Christ, they will soon discover that there would be no agreement about the Lord. But we have the word of God, the Scriptures, and in them we find Christ revealed as he really is in all the splendor of his person and work.

Who is Jesus of Nazareth? He is the preexistent Son of God, the savior of the world, who by his death has conquered all the enemies of God and man.

by Joe Nesom