

A summary of John 1:19 - 28 (Oct.5, 2017)

1. John the Baptist testified, not that he was Elijah or the prophet, or the Christ. Instead he testified that he was the voice of one crying out in the wilderness (John 1:23). Do we have a testimony of who the Lord is to us, and how He has spoken to us, and how we have responded to him? John the Baptist responded to the Lord's speaking to him by crying out (preaching the gospel) to those in the wilderness.
2. John's speaking was based on what the Lord spoke to him, not on his status as a prophet, even though he had been prophesied as someone who would come as Elijah (Malachi 4:5), and even though Jesus would refer to him in the same way (Matthew 11:9, 14). The religious people tried to pin down John the Baptist, to force him to reveal who he was. May our speaking not be based on status or reputation or what we think we are (prophet, teacher etc.), but on what the Lord has spoken to us, and what our response is. It is not for us to say who we are, but all our speaking must be before God, unto God, and for God, to satisfy Him and be faithful to what He has given us.
3. John cried out as a voice in the wilderness. To cry out indicates desperation, not just to preach a message. There is a burden, something pressing that needs to be released. Is my preaching of the gospel a mere message, a duty to be fulfilled by saying something, or a crying out, a release of a burden deep within?
4. The wilderness can indicate a place that is set apart, apart from the religious environment, where one can spend time with the Lord alone. It also indicates a dry and barren place. Am I willing to cry out (preach the gospel) in the wilderness, that is, to go to people who are dry (lost, in the world), to people who may not receive or feel the need to receive?
5. John the Baptist answered the religious people's questions, the last one concerning why he baptized people if he was neither Christ nor Elijah nor the prophet (v. 25-26), by bringing them to Christ. He did not directly answer their question. We need to have discernment when we are asked questions. The main purpose in answering questions concerning the Bible is not just to answer the question and explain verses, but to impart revelation, to bring people to know the Christ that they do not know yet (v. 26).
6. When we ask questions, do we ask them to gain more knowledge (v. 22, 24), or to know who Christ is? Some questions may damage us instead of helping us. That is why it is always good to be able to first testify (even a little bit) concerning how the Lord has touched us, and then ask questions. This may save us from merely seeking to gain vain knowledge which will not cause us to grow very much in life.