

“Behold the man!”

The titles and descriptions of Jesus of Nazareth

12. A trustworthy man

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THE TITLES in this chapter are all quite similar. They all are from the mouth of our Lord himself and are found in the book of Revelation. If one of us claimed to be trustworthy, we would not be believed unless there was evidence to support our claim. Self-testimony is a doubtful recommendation. Why then should we believe Jesus?

He answers that question for us in John 5:31-37: “If I bear witness of myself, my witness is not true. There is another that beareth witness of me; and I know that the witness which he witnesseth of me is true. Ye sent unto John, and he bare witness unto the truth. But I receive not testimony from man: but these things I say, that ye might be saved. He was a burning and a shining light: and ye were willing for a season to rejoice in his light. But I have greater witness than that of John: for the works which the Father hath given me to finish, the same works that I do, bear witness of me, that the Father hath sent me. And the Father Himself, Which hath sent me, hath borne witness of me”.

This agrees with the testimony of the Apostle Peter in Acts 2:22: “Ye men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know . . .”. We can believe the witness of Jesus because it has been supported by others, and even by God Himself. In these titles we will find a comforting message. We can place our trust in him. We can confide in him and not be let down.

The titles are composed chiefly of two words, ‘faithful’ and ‘true’. It is reasonable to discuss the words here, as we will find the meanings relevant for them all.

The word ‘faithful’ (Gk. *pistos*) has two basic meanings: to be trusty or reliable, and to be easily accepting of truth. All the former are applicable to Jesus Christ, while the latter have reference to us believing in him. There are three ways in which the word is used in the sense of being trustworthy:

- 1 one who shows himself faithful in the transaction of business or official duties
- 2 one who maintains his faith despite adversity
- 3 one who is reliable.

It is not difficult to see why these may be used of Christ.

The word ‘true’ (Gk. *alēthinos*) is also interesting. It has two basic meanings, according to Thayer:

- 1 that which has not only the name and resemblance, but the real nature corresponding to the name, in every respect corresponding to the idea signified by the name, real, true, genuine:
 - 1a opposite to what is fictitious, counterfeit, imaginary, simulated or pretended
 - 1b it contrasts realities with their semblances
 - 1c opposite to what is imperfect, defective, frail, uncertain
- 2 true, veracious, sincere.

This word allows us to realise that Jesus was not a fraud. He did not falsely represent God, nor did he claim to be a saviour when he was not.

Having understood the basic terms, let us now see how Jesus uses them of himself.

He that is true

This title is found in Revelation 3:7. The emphasis here seems to be on reassuring the Philadelphian brethren and sisters that their trust in him is not misplaced. There is a reward for those who patiently trust in him. The hope is real and genuine, and will be realised.

Faithful and true

This title is found in Revelation 19:11. The picture is of Jesus Christ and the saints marching to do battle. In days gone by, knights and mighty men had emblems and insignia of identification on their armour or their clothing. The impression here is that the insignia of Christ is “Faithful and True”. This is to add to the other names that appear on his person, “The Word of God” (on his crown?), and “KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS” on his thigh and coat (vv. 13,16).

All the saints who submitted to the wickedness about them, trusting that they would be avenged ultimately, will be found to have placed their trust well. The mighty warrior of their cause is "Faithful and True".

The faithful witness

This title is found in Revelation 1:5. The word 'witness' is the Greek *martus*, from which our English word 'martyr' comes. We are, then, speaking of a man who was so completely faithful to his Father's commission and to upholding truth that he died for the testimony that he bore. How many of us have been called upon to do that? How many of us would answer such a call if it were made? It has been! We are to be faithful to Christ in every circumstance; faithful unto death if necessary.

The faithful and true witness

This is found in Revelation 3:14. This has all the elements of the above titles put together. How marvellously did Jesus show his Father's char-

acter! He would sooner die than be untrue or show God's trust in him to be unfounded. We may safely trust in him who is faithful and true even to death.

The Amen

This title is also found in Revelation 3:14. The word has been transliterated from Hebrew into Greek and then into English. The Hebrew *amam* means to believe or to be faithful, and is a very similar word to that for 'amen', which is the word *aman*. By degrees it came to mean that which was sure and trustworthy. When said at the beginning of a speech it indicates the truth of what is to follow. When said at the end it represents the firm hope that what has been said will occur. It is an expression of absolute trust or confidence based on the reliability of God and Christ. It is used by Christ in Revelation 22:20: "Surely I come quickly. Amen". What the title is telling us is that Jesus Christ is God's guarantee of the fulfilment of His purpose. This is the idea behind the word "assurance" in Acts 17:31.

[\(To be continued\)](#)