

The True Light and His Witness

John 1:6-10

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John and John call us to believe in the source of genuine light.

I. The Apostle introduces the divinely appointed prophetic preparer for the Messiah. (v. 6)

In the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar—[and Luke mentions specific multiple Roman and Jewish leaders in power at that time, and he relates that]— during the high-priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas, the word of God came to John son of Zechariah in the wilderness. He went into all the country around the Jordan, preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. (Luke 3:1-3)

In those days John the Baptist came, preaching in the wilderness of Judea and saying, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near.” This is he who was spoken of through the prophet Isaiah:

“A voice of one calling in the wilderness,
‘Prepare the way for the Lord,
make straight paths for him.’”[Isaiah 40:3]

John’s clothes were made of camel’s hair, and he had a leather belt around his waist. His food was locusts and wild honey. People went out to him from Jerusalem and all Judea and the whole region of the Jordan. Confessing their sins, they were baptized by him in the Jordan River. But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to where he was baptizing, he said to them: “You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath? Produce fruit in keeping with repentance. And do not think you can say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham as our father.’ I tell you that out of these stones God can raise up children for Abraham. The ax is already at the root of the trees, and every tree that does not produce good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire.

“I baptize you with water for repentance. But after me comes one who is more powerful than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing floor, gathering his wheat into the barn and burning up the chaff with unquenchable fire.” (Matthew 3:1-12)

John: (Gr.) Ionanes = "Yahweh is a gracious giver" and (Heb.) Johanan = "Yahweh has graced"

In the time of Herod king of Judea there was a priest named Zechariah, who belonged to the priestly division of Abijah; his wife Elizabeth was also a descendant of Aaron. Both of them were righteous in the sight of God, observing all the Lord’s commands and decrees blamelessly. But they were childless because Elizabeth was not able to conceive, and they were both very old.

Once when Zechariah's division was on duty and he was serving as priest before God, he was chosen by lot, according to the custom of the priesthood, to go into the temple of the Lord and burn incense. And when the time for the burning of incense came, all the assembled worshippers were praying outside.

Then an angel of the Lord appeared to him, standing at the right side of the altar of incense. When Zechariah saw him, he was startled and was gripped with fear. But the angel said to him: "Do not be afraid, Zechariah; your prayer has been heard. Your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you are to call him John. He will be a joy and delight to you, and many will rejoice because of his birth, for he will be great in the sight of the Lord. He is never to take wine or other fermented drink, and he will be filled with the Holy Spirit even before he is born. He will bring back many of the people of Israel to the Lord their God. And he will go on before the Lord, in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the parents to their children and the disobedient to the wisdom of the righteous—to make ready a people prepared for the Lord." (Luke 1:5-17)

"Whoever does the will of My Father in heaven is My brother and sister and mother..." (Matthew 12:50)

II. The Baptizer was to point people to the source of Light in order that they might find salvation. (v. 7)

But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." (Acts 1:8)

"We are witnesses of everything he did in the country of the Jews and in Jerusalem. They killed him by hanging him on a cross, but God raised him from the dead on the third day and caused him to be seen. He was not seen by all the people, but by witnesses whom God had already chosen—by us who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead. He commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that he is the one whom God appointed as judge of the living and the dead. All the prophets testify about him that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name." (Acts 10:39-43)

You then, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable people who will also be qualified to teach others. (2 Timothy 2:1-2)

Jesus performed many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book. But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name. (John 20:30-31)

Notitia: Awareness of the facts

Assensus: Agreement with the facts

Fiducia: Trust in the fact revealer

If you declare with your mouth, “Jesus is Lord,” and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. (Romans 10:9)

By faith we understand that the universe was formed at God’s command, so that what is seen was not made out of what was visible... And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him. (Hebrews 11:3, 6)

Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God... (1 John 5:1a)

We are therefore Christ’s ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ’s behalf: Be reconciled to God. (2 Corinthians 5:8)

III. The Apostle was quick to differentiate between the Light and the witness. (v. 8)

The people were waiting expectantly and were all wondering in their hearts if John might possibly be the Messiah... And with many other words John exhorted the people and proclaimed the good news to them. But when John rebuked Herod the tetrarch because of his [unrighteous] marriage to Herodias, his brother’s wife, and all the other evil things he had done, Herod added this to them all: He locked John up in prison. (Luke 3:15, 18-20)

Meanwhile a Jew named Apollos, a native of Alexandria, came to Ephesus. He was a learned man, with a thorough knowledge of the Scriptures. He had been instructed in the way of the Lord, and he spoke with great fervor and taught about Jesus accurately, though he knew only the baptism of John. He began to speak boldly in the synagogue. When Priscilla and Aquila heard him, they invited him to their home and explained to him the way of God more adequately. (Acts 18:24-25)

While Apollos was at Corinth, Paul took the road through the interior and arrived at Ephesus. There he found some disciples and asked them, “Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?”

They answered, “No, we have not even heard that there is a Holy Spirit.”

So Paul asked, “Then what baptism did you receive?”

“John’s baptism,” they replied.

Paul said, “John’s baptism was a baptism of repentance. He told the people to believe in the one coming after him, that is, in Jesus.” On hearing this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. (Acts 19:1-5)

Now if the ministry that brought death, which was engraved in letters on stone, came with glory, so that the Israelites could not look steadily at the face of Moses because of its glory, transitory though it was, will not the ministry of the Spirit be even more glorious? If the ministry that brought condemnation was glorious, how much more glorious is the ministry that brings righteousness! For what was glorious has no glory now in comparison with the

surpassing glory. And if what was transitory came with glory, how much greater is the glory of that which lasts!

Therefore, since we have such a hope, we are very bold. We are not like Moses, who would put a veil over his face to prevent the Israelites from seeing the end of what was passing away. But their minds were made dull, for to this day the same veil remains when the old covenant is read. It has not been removed, because only in Christ is it taken away. Even to this day when Moses is read, a veil covers their hearts. But whenever anyone turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away. Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. And we all, who with unveiled faces contemplate the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his image with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit. (2 Corinthians 3:7-18)

For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light (for the fruit of the light consists in all goodness, righteousness and truth) and find out what pleases the Lord. Have nothing to do with the fruitless deeds of darkness, but rather expose them. It is shameful even to mention what the disobedient do in secret. But everything exposed by the light becomes visible—and everything that is illuminated becomes a light. This is why it is said:

“Wake up, sleeper,
rise from the dead,
and Christ will shine on you.” (Ephesians 5:8-14)

But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect... (1 Peter 3:5)

IV. The Apostle and the Baptizer both testified to the genuineness of the Light. (v. 9)

They are darkened in their understanding and separated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them due to the hardening of their hearts. (Ephesians 4:18)

...dead in our transgressions and sin... (Ephesians 2:1)

The person without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God but considers them foolishness, and cannot understand them because they are discerned only through the Spirit. (1 Corinthians 2:14)

The “World” in John:

- 1a) The created universe
- 1b) The planet earth (the home of mankind)
- 2a) Mankind generally (both saved & unsaved)
- 2b) Fallen mankind (marked by evil behavior)
- 3a) World Affairs
- 3b) Fallen World System

V. The Light's appearing was met mostly with indifference or outright hostility. (v. 10)

See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God!
And that is what we are! The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him. (1 John 3:1)

Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to mankind by which we must be saved.” (Acts 4:12)

“If the world hates you, keep in mind that it hated me first.” (John 5:18)