



The first eighteen verses of John are his prologue. Last week we studied the deity of Christ. In this week's text (1:6-13) **the main idea is how we respond to the true Light.** John continues to introduce us to major ideas and themes he will be expanding on in the rest of the book. He introduces us to the first of several witnesses, he expands on his theme of the Light from verses 4 and 5, the call to believe, and the idea of being born from above.

⁶There came a man sent from God, whose name was John. ⁷He came as a witness, to testify about the Light, so that all might believe through him. ⁸He was not the Light, but he came to testify about the Light. ⁹There was the true Light which, coming into the world, enlightens every man. ¹⁰He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him. ¹¹He came to His own, and those who were His own did not receive Him. ¹²But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name, ¹³who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.

A simple outline of this text looks like this:

- The witness of John to the Light
 - John came from God
 - John came to testify about the Light
 - John was not the Light
- The True Light
 - The true Light came into the world to enlighten every man
 - The true Light, when He was in the world, was not recognized by the world He had made
 - The true Light was rejected by His own
- Those Who Respond to the Light by Believing in His Name Become Children of God
 - Not of Blood
 - Not by the Will of the Flesh
 - Not by the Will of Man
 - But of God

The Witness of John to the Light. This is John the Baptist, not the writer of the Gospel of John. In contrast to the Word introduced in the first 5 verses; John came – the Word was, John was a man – the Word was God, John was sent from God – the Word was God.

The first thing the writer wants us to know about this witness is that **He Came From God.** John the Baptist is an important figure. He was the fulfillment of the prophecy found in Isaiah 40:3 – “A voice is calling, ‘Clear the way for the Lord in the wilderness; Make smooth in the desert a highway for our God.’”

The unique circumstances surrounding his birth are recorded in Luke 1:8-17: his conception and birth were miraculous, an Angel told his parents that he would be a herald for the Messiah, and the Holy Spirit enabled Zacharias to prophesy concerning John. He was clearly sent by God to announce the coming of the messiah.

Next in verse seven, we are told why John the Baptist was sent from God. **He was to testify about the Light, so that others would believe in the Light.** His job like a herald was to prepare the people and proclaim the coming of the Messiah. The Jews were waiting with great anticipation for the coming of the Messiah. John's important task as a witness was to make it clear that Jesus was the Messiah so that they would believe in Him.

John was Not the Light. Although this may seem obvious to us, it was not to some in John's day. John was a charismatic figure and attracted a large following. Many years later there were people still following the teachings of John as far away as Ephesus (Acts 19:1-5). In his own day some, including the leaders of Israel, wondered if he was the Messiah. John testified clearly about himself that he was not the Light.

Legislators deal with testimony all the time. There are witnesses who are known to give true and accurate testimony and those who do not. John was sent from God and his testimony is true - Jesus is the Christ. Do we believe his testimony?

The True Light is Jesus Christ. He is the authentic, real, genuine Light. Hebrews 1:3 says “And He is the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature.” This sets Him apart from everyone else. In John's metaphor the Light is Jesus coming into the world and showing the world what God is truly like.

Prior to Christ coming into the world there was some

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knowledge of God. In Romans 1:18-21 we are told that God made himself evident to man through what He created. Later in Romans 2:14-15 it is further revealed that the “Law,” what is right and wrong, is written on our hearts. The Old Testament Scriptures also reveal much about God to us.

By coming into the world **Christ enlightens “every man”** as to what God is like. Jesus says in John 14:9 “He who has seen Me has seen the Father.”

In the first five verses of John we learned that Jesus was the agent of God in creation. He made the world and everything in it. Jesus was the one who made man from the dust of the ground and breathed into him the breath of life. He is the one who knits us together in our mother’s womb.

It is quite shocking then when the text says that **when He came into the world, the world did not recognize Him.** The created had strayed so far and was so enveloped in sin that it did not recognize its own creator. How far humankind had fallen from the time in the Garden of Eden when they had walked with God.

Even more devastating is the fact that **“He came to His own, and those who were His own did not receive Him.”** Jesus was a Jew. The Jews were God’s chosen people. He had said to them “You only have I chosen among all the families of the earth.”

Not only were they God’s chosen people but they waited with great anticipation for the Messiah. The Old Testament is full of prophecies describing the coming of the Messiah. The Jews were expecting Him and yet when He came they rejected Him. In Acts 2, Peter made it clear to the Jews that they had crucified their Messiah.

The true Light in the person of Jesus Christ had come to earth and had shown what God was like. The world he had created did not recognize him and rather than embracing Him, His own people had rejected Him.

Thankfully, that is not the end of it. Verse 12 starts off with an important “But.” Some did (and do) receive Him. Those who “believe in His name” become children of God. Believing in His name is more than just affirming the fact that He existed. It is trusting in who He is, that He is fully God and fully man. It is trusting in His character and what He did – that He died for our sins and rose again. It is recognizing Him as both Savior and Lord.

John lists three ways that we are NOT saved, and then the way that we ARE saved.

First, we are not saved by blood. This means that our heritage cannot save us. It did not matter that some of John’s original readers were Jews. The fact that they were descendants of God’s chosen people would not save them. The fact that our parents may be Christians does not save us either.

Second, we are not saved by the will of the flesh. This means that our effort cannot save us. We cannot do enough good things to earn salvation. In John’s day the Pharisees were a sect of Jews who were known for the great efforts they went through to keep the law. It was not enough. Our effort is not enough.

Third, we are not saved by the will of man. This is referring to all other man-made systems – religions. Humankind is very inventive and has come up with all sorts of ideas and religions for getting to God. No amount of ritual or sacrifice or any other part of religion can save us.

But of God. Salvation only comes through the grace of God by believing in His name.

Ephesians 2:8-9 says. For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, so that no one may boast.

John has introduced us to his first witness, John the Baptist. John the Baptist is a true witness sent from God. He testifies that Jesus is the Christ. John then shows us that there are two types of people. There are those who reject Christ and there are those who receive Him by Believing in His name. Which type are we?



Bible Study Information:

Legislators Only

Next Study: Tuesday, February 6th

Time: 8:00 pm

Location: Perkins in Fort Pierre

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Responding to the Light

John 1:6-13

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